

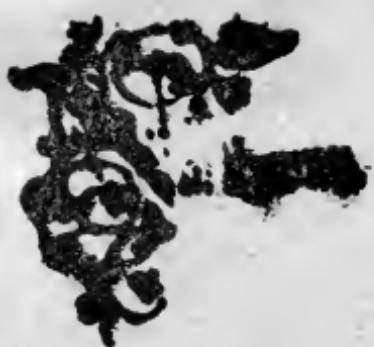
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JOHN ANDREW SON.

DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES

BY SOPHIE MAY.

ILLUSTRATED



DOTTY OUT WEST.

LEE & SHEPARD BOSTON

KILBURN SC. & J. R. SAYERS, D.C.



DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES.

DOTTY DIMPLE OUT WEST.

BY SOPHIE MAY,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES."

Illustrated.

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DOTTY DIMPLE OUT WEST.

CHAPTER I.

STARTING.

ONE beautiful morning in October the sun came up rejoicing. Dotty Dimple watched it from the window with feelings of peculiar pleasure.

“I should think that old sun would wear out and grow rough round the edges. Why not? Last week it was ever so dull; now it is bright. I shouldn’t wonder if the angels up there have to scour it once in a while.”

You perceive that Dotty’s ideas of astronomy were anything but correct. She supposed the solar orb was composed of a

very peculiar kind of gold, which could be rubbed as easily as Norah's tin pans, though so intensely hot that one's fingers would, most likely, be scorched in the operation.

On this particular morning she felt an unusual interest in the state of the weather. It had been decided that she should go West with her father, and this was the day set for departure. "I am happy up to my throat:" so she said to Prudy. And now all this happiness was to be buttoned up in a cunning little casaque, with new gaiters at the feet, and a hat and rosette at the top. Forty pounds or so of perfect delight going down to the depot in a carriage.

"Don't you wish you could go, Zip Parlin? I'd like to hear you bark in the cars; and I'd like to hear *you* talk, Prudy, too!"

As Dotty spoke, the faintest possible shadow flickered across her radiant face;

but it was only for a moment. She could not have quite everything she wanted, because she could not have Prudy; but then they were to take a basket of cold boiled eggs, sandwiches, and pies; and over these viands, with a napkin between, were two picture-books and a small spy-glass. There was a trunk with a sunshade in it, and some pretty dresses; among them the favorite white delaine, no longer stained with marmalade. There were presents in the trunk for Grace, Horace, and Katie, which were to take them by surprise. And more and better than all, Miss Dotty had in her own pocket a little porte-monnaie, containing fifty cents in scrip, with full permission to spend it all on the way. She also had a letter from Susy to be read at Boston, and one from Prudy to be read at Albany.

Yes, there was everything to be thankful

for, and nothing to regret. She was quite well by this time. The rich, warm color had come back to her cheeks. She did not need the journey for the sake of her health; her papa was to take her because he chose to give her the same pleasure he had once given Prudy. It was Susy's private opinion that it was rightfully her turn this time, instead of Dotty's; but she was quite patient, and willing to wait.

It was a long journey for such a little child; and Mrs. Parlin almost regretted that the promise had been made; but the young traveller would only be gone three or four weeks, and in her aunt's family was not likely to be homesick.

It was a very slow morning to Dotty. "Seems to me," said she, vibrating between the parlor and the kitchen like a discontented little pendulum,—"seems to me

it was a great deal later than this yesterday!"

She had eaten as many mouthfuls of breakfast as she possibly could in her excited condition, had kissed everybody good by twice over, and now thought it was time to be starting.

Just as her patience was wearing to a thread the hack arrived, looking as black and glossy as if some one had been all this time polishing it for the occasion. Dotty disdained the help of the driver, and stepped into the carriage as eagerly as Jack climbed the bean-stalk. She flirted her clean dress against the wheel, but did not observe it. She was as happy as Jack when he reached the giant's house; happier too, for she had mounted to a castle in the air; and everybody knows a castle in the air is gayer than all the gold houses that ever grew on the

top of a stalk. To the eye of the world she seemed to be sitting on a drab cushion, behind a gray horse; but no, she was really several thousand feet in the air, floating on a cloud.

Her father smiled as he stepped leisurely into the hack; and he could not forbear kissing the little face which sparkled with such anticipation.

“It is a real satisfaction,” thought he, “to be able to make a child so happy.”

The group at the door looked after them wistfully.

“Be a good child,” said Mrs. Parlin, waving her handkerchief, “and do just as papa tells you, my dear.”

“Remember the three hugs to Gracie, and six to Flyaway,” cried Prudy; “and don’t let anybody see my letter.”

Dotty threw kisses with such vigor, that,

if they had been anything else but air, somebody would have been hit.

The hack ride did not last long. It was like the preface to a story-book ; and Dotty did not think much about it after she had come to the story,—that is to say, to the cars.

Her father found a pleasant seat on the shady side, hung the basket in a rack, opened a window ; and very soon the iron horse, which fed on fire, rushed, snorting and shrieking, away from the depot. Dotty felt as if she had a pair of wings on her shoulders, or a pair of seven-league boots on her feet ; at any rate, she was whirling through space without any will of her own. The trees nodded in a kindly way, and the grass in the fields seemed to say, as it waved, “Good by, Dotty, dear ! good by ! You’ll have a splendid time out West ! out West ! out West !”

It was not at all like going to Willow-brook. It seemed as if these Boston cars had a motion peculiar to themselves. It was a very small event just to take an afternoon's ride to Grandpa Parlin's; but when it came to whizzing out to Indiana, why, that was another affair! It wasn't every little girl who could be trusted so far without her mother.

"If I was *some* children," thought Dotty, "I shouldn't know how to part my hair in the middle. Then my papa wouldn't dare to take me; for *he* can't part my hair any mor'n a cat!"

Dotty smiled loftily as she looked at her father reading a newspaper. He was only a man; and though intelligent enough to manage the trunks, and proceed in a straight line to Indiana, still he was incapable of understanding when a young lady's hat was

put on straight, and had once made the rosette come behind !

In view of these short-comings of her parent and her own adroitness at the toilet, Dotty came to the conclusion that she was not, strictly speaking, under any one's charge, but was taking care of herself.

"I wonder," thought she, "how many people there are in this car that know I'm going out West!"

She sat up very primly, and looked around. The faces were nearly all new to her.

"That woman in the next seat, how homely her little girl is, with freckles all over her face! Perhaps her mother wishes she was as white as I am. Why, who is that pretty little girl close to my father?"

Dotty was looking straight forward, and had accidentally caught a peep at her own face in the mirror.

“Why, it’s me! How nice I look!” smiling and nodding at the pleasant picture. “Sit up like a lady, Dotty, and you’ll look very polite, and very *style* too.”

Florence Eastman said so much about “style” that Miss Dimple had adopted the word, though she was never know to use it correctly. I am sorry to say there was a deal of foolish vanity in the child’s heart. Thoughtless people had so often spoken to her of her beauty, that she was inclined to dwell upon the theme secretly, and to admire her bright eyes in the glass.

“Yes, I do look very *style*,” she decided, after another self-satisfied nod. “Now I’d just like to know who that boy is, older’n I am, not half so pretty. I don’t believe but somebody’s been sitting down on his hat. What has he got in his lap? Is it a kitten? White as snow. I wish it wasn’t so far off.

He's giving it something to eat. How its ears shake! Papa, papa, what's that boy got in his lap?"

"What boy?"

"The one next to that big man. See his ears shake! He's putting something in his mouth."

"In whose mouth?"

Mr. Parlin looked across the aisle.

"That 'big man' is my old friend Captain Lally," said he quite pleased; and in a moment he was shaking hands with him. Presently the captain and his son Adolphus changed places with the woman and the freckled girl, and made themselves neighbors to the Parlins. The two seats were turned *vis-a-vis*, the gentlemen occupying one, the children the other.

Now Dotty discovered what it was that Adolphus had in his lap; it was a Spanish

rabbit; and if you never saw one, little reader, you have no idea how beautiful an animal can be. If there is any gem so soft and sparkling as his liquid Indian-red eyes, with the sunshine quivering in them as in dewdrops, then I should like to see that gem, and have it set in the finest gold, and send it to the most beautiful woman in the world to wear for a ring. This rabbit was white as a snowball, with ears as pink as blush roses, and a mouth that was always in motion, whether Adolphus put lumps of sugar in it or not.

Dotty went into raptures. She forgot her "style" hat, and her new dignity, and had no greater ambition than to hold the lovely white ball in her arms. Adolphus allowed her to do so. He was very kind to answer all her questions, and always in the most sensible manner. If Dotty had been a little

older, she would have seen that the captain's son was a remarkably intelligent boy, in spite of his smashed hat.

After everything had been said that could possibly be thought of, in regard to rabbits and their ways, Dotty looked again, and very critically, at Adolphus. His collar was wrinkled, his necktie one-sided, he wore no gloves, and, on the whole, was not dressed as well as Dotty, who had started from home that very morning, clean and fresh. He was every day as old as Susy; but Miss Dimple, as a traveller bound on a long journey, felt herself older and wiser still, and began to talk accordingly. Smoothing down the skirt of her dress with her neatly-gloved hands, she remarked:—

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTAIN'S SON.

“Is your name Dollyphus?”

“Yes, Adolphus Lally.”

“Well, my name is Alice. Nobody calls me by it but my papa and my grandmas. Dotty Dimple is my short name. There are a pair of dimples dotted into my cheek; don’t you see? That’s what it’s for. I was born so. My *other* sisters haven’t any at all.”

Adolphus smiled quietly; he had seen dimples before.

“You didn’t ever know till just now there was any such girl as *me*, I s’pose.”

“No, I never did.”

“I live in the city of Portland,” pursued Dotty, with a grand air, “and my papa and mamma, and two sisters, and a Quaker grandma (only you must say ‘Friend’) with a white handkerchief on. Have you any grandma like that?”

“No, my grandmother is dead.”

“Why, there’s two of mine alive, and one grandpa. Just as nice! They don’t scold. They let you do everything. I wouldn’t *not* have grandmothers and fathers for anything! But *you* can’t help it. Did you ever have your house burnt up?”

“No, indeed.”

“Well, ours did; the chambers, and the cellar, and the windows and doors. We hadn’t any place to stay. My sister Susy! You ought to heard her cry! I lost the beautifulest tea-set; but I didn’t say much about it.”

“Where do you live now?”

“O, there was a man let us have another house. It isn’t so handsome as our house was; for the man can’t make things so nice as my father can. We live in it now. Can you play the piano?”

“No, not at all.”

“Don’t you, honestly; Why, I do. Susy’s given me five lessons. You have to sit up as straight as a pin, and count your fingers, one, two, three, four. X is your thumb.”

Dotty believed she was imparting valuable information. She felt great pleasure in having found a travelling companion to whom she could make herself useful.

“I’m going to tell you something. Did you ever go to Indiana?”

“No.”

“Didn’t you? They call it Out West.

I'm going there. Yes, I started to-day. The people are called Hoojers. They don't spect me, but I'm going. Did you ever hear of a girl that travelled out West?"

"O, yes; ever so many."

"I mean a girl as little as me, 'thout anybody but my papa; and he don't know how to part my hair in the middle. I have to take all the care of myself."

Dotty had been trying all the while to call forth some exclamation of awe, or at least surprise. She was sure Adolphus would be impressed now.

"All the whole care of myself," repeated she. "My papa has one of the *highest* 'pinions of me; and he says I'm as good as a lady when I try. Were you ever in the cars before, Dollyphus?"

"O, yes," was the demure reply, "a great many times. I've been round the world."

Dotty started suddenly, dropping her porte-monnaie on the floor.

“Round the world! The whole round world?” gasped she, feeling as insignificant as a “catharine wheel,” which, having “gone up like a rocket,” has come down “like a stick.”

“You didn’t say round the *whole* world?” repeated she, looking very flat indeed.

“O, yes, in my father’s ship.”

His “father’s ship.” Dotty’s look of superiority was quenched entirely. Even her jaunty hat seemed to humble itself, and her haughty head sink with it.

Adolphus stooped and restored the porte-monnaie, which, in her surprise, she had quite forgotten.

“Does your father keep a ship?” asked she, reverently.

“Yes; and mother often makes voyages

with him. Once they took me; and that was the time I went round the world. We were gone two years."

"Weren't you afraid?"

"No, I'm never afraid where my father is."

"Just a little afraid, I mean, when you found the ship was going tip-side up?"

"Tip-side up?" said Adolphus. "I don't understand you."

"Why, when you got to the other side of the world, then of course the ship turned right over, you know. Didn't you want to catch hold of something, for fear you'd fall into the sky?"

Adolphus laughed; he could not very well help it; but, observing the mortification expressed in his companion's face, he sobered himself instantly, and replied,—

"No, Dotty; the world is round, but you wouldn't know it by the looks of it. Wher-

ever I've been, the land seems flat, except the hills, and so does the water, all but the waves."

As the captain's son said this, he looked pityingly at his little companion, wondering how she happened to be so silly as to suppose a ship ever went "tip-side up." But he was mistaken if he considered Dotty a simpleton. The child had never gone to school. Her parents believed there would be time enough yet for her to learn a great many things; and her ignorance had never distressed them half so much as her faults of temper.

"Did you ever go as far as Boston before?" pursued Adolphus, rather grandly, in his turn.

"No, I never," replied Dotty, meekly; "but Prudy has."

"So I presume you haven't been in Spain?"

It was there I bought my beautiful rabbit.
Were you ever in the Straits of Malacca?"
continued he, roguishly.

"No—o. I didn't know I was."

"Indeed? Nor in the Bay of Palermo?
The Italians call it the Golden Shell."

"I don't *s'pose* I ever," replied Dotty,
with a faint effort to keep up appearances;
"but I went to *Quoddy* Bay once!"

"So you haven't seen the *loory*? It is a
beautiful bird, and talks better than a par-
rot. I have one at home."

"O, have you?" said Dotty, in a tone of
the deepest respect.

"Yes; then there is the *mina*, a brown
bird, larger than a crow; converses quite
fluently. You have heard of a mina, I dare
say." —

Dotty shook her head in despair. She
was so overwhelmed by this time, that, if

Adolphus had told of going with Captain Lally to the moon in a balloon, she would not have been greatly surprised.

A humorous smile played around the boy's mouth. Observing his little companion's extreme simplicity, he was tempted to invent some marvellous stories for the sake of seeing her eyes shine.

"I can explain it to her afterwards," said he to his conscience.

"Did you ever hear of the Great Dipper, Dotty?"

"I don't know's I did. No."

"You don't say so! Never heard of the Great Dipper! Your sister Prudy has, I'm sure. It is tied to the north pole, and you can dip water with it."

"Is it big?"

"No, not very. About the size of a tub."

“A dipper as big as a tub?” repeated Dotty, slowly.

“Yes, with the longest kind of handle.”

“I couldn’t lift it?”

“No, I should judge not.”

“Who tied it to the north pole?”

“I don’t know. Columbus, perhaps. You remember he discovered the world?”

Dotty brightened.

“O, yes, I’ve heard about that! Susy read it in a book.”

“Well, I’ll tell you how it was. There had been a world, you see; but people had lost the run of it, and didn’t know where it was, after the flood. And then Columbus went in a ship and discovered it.”

“He did?”

Dotty looked keenly at the captain’s son. He was certainly in earnest; but there was something about it she did not exactly understand.

“Why, if there wasn’t any world all the time, where did *C’lumbus* come from?” faltered she, at last.

“It is not generally known,” replied Adolphus, taking off his hat, and hiding his face in it.

Dolly sat for some time lost in thought.

“O, I forgot to say,” resumed Adolphus, “the north pole isn’t driven in so hard as it ought to be. It is so cold up there that the frost ‘heaves’ it. You know what ‘heaves’ means? The ground freezes and then thaws, and that loosens the pole. Somebody has to pound it down, and that makes the noise we call thunder.”

Dotty said nothing to this; but her youthful face expressed surprise, largely mingled with doubt.

“You have heard of the *axes* of the earth? That is what they pound the pole with.

Queer—isn't it? But not so queer to me as the Red Sea."

Adolphus paused, expecting to be questioned; but Dotty maintained a discreet silence.

"The water is a very bright red, I know; but I never *could* believe that story about the giant's having the nose-bleed, and coloring the whole sea with blood. Did you ever hear of that?"

"No, I never," replied Dotty, gravely. "You needn't tell it, Dollyphus. I'm too tired to talk."

Adolphus felt rather piqued as the little girl turned away her head and steadily gazed out of the window at the trees and houses flying by. It appeared very much as if she suspected he had been making sport of her.

"She isn't a perfect ignoramus, after all." he thought; "that last lie was a little too big."

After this he sat for some time watching his little companion, anxious for an opportunity to assure her that these absurd stories had been spun out of his own brain. But Dotty never once turned her face towards him. She was thinking,—

“P’rhaps he’s a good boy; p’rhaps he’s a naughty boy: but I shan’t believe him till I ask my father.”

At Portsmouth, Captain Lally and son left the cars, much to Dotty’s relief, though they did carry away the beautiful Spanish rabbit; and it seemed to the child as if a piece of her heart went with it.

“Is my little girl tired?” said Mr. Parlin, putting an arm around Dotty.

“No, papa, only I’m thinking. The north pole is top of the world—isn’t it? As much as five hundred miles off?”

“A great deal farther than that, my dear.”

"There, I thought so! And we couldn't hear 'em pound it down with an axe—could we? That isn't what makes thunder? O, what a boy!"

Mr. Parlin laughed heartily.

"Did Adolphus tell you such a story as that?"

"Yes, sir, he did," cried Dotty, indignantly, "and said there was a dipper to it, with a handle on, as large as a tub. And a man tied it that came from I-don't-know-where, and found this world. I know *that* wasn't true, for he didn't say anything about Adam and Eve. What an awful boy!"

"What did you say to Adolphus?" said Mr. Parlin, still laughing. "Hadn't you been putting on airs? And wasn't that the reason he made sport of you?"

"I don't know what 'airs' are, papa."

"Perhaps you told him, for instance, that

you were travelling out West, and asked him if *he* ever went so far as that."

"Perhaps I did," stammered Dotty.

"And it is very likely you made the remark that you had the whole care of yourself, and knew how to part your hair in the middle. I did not listen; but it is possible you told him you could play on the piano."

Dotty looked quite ashamed.

"This is what we call 'putting on airs.' Adolphus was at first rather quiet and unpretending. Didn't you think he might be a little stupid? And didn't you wish to give him the idea that you yourself were something of a fine lady?"

How very strange it was to Dotty that her father could read the secret thoughts which she herself could hardly have told! She felt supremely wretched, and crept into his bosom to hide her blushing face.

"I didn't say Adolphus did right to tease you," said Mr. Parlin, gently.

He thought the little girl's lesson had been quite severe enough; for, after all, she had done nothing very wrong: she had only been a little foolish.

"Upon my word, chincapin," said he, "we haven't opened that basket yet! What do you say to a lunch, with the Boston Journal for a table-cloth? And here comes a boy with some apples."

In two minutes Dotty had buried her chagrin in a sandwich.

And all the while the cars were racketing along towards Boston.

CHAPTER III.

A BABY IN A BLUE CLOAK.

DOTTY had begun to smile again, and was talking pleasantly with her father, when there was a sudden rocking of the cars, or, as Prudy had called it, a "car-quake." Dotty would have been greatly alarmed if she had not looked up in her father's face and seen that it was perfectly tranquil. They had run over a cow.

This little accident gave a new turn to the child's thoughts. She gazed at the conductor with some distrust. If he did not take care of the cars, what made him wear that printed hat-band? She supposed that

in some mysterious way he drove or guided the furious iron horse; and when she saw him sitting at ease, conversing with the passengers, she was not satisfied; she thought he was neglecting his duty.

"I s'pose," mused she, finishing the final crumb of her sandwich, — "I s'pose there are two kinds of conductors in cars, same as in thunder. One is a *non*, and the other isn't. I'm afraid this man is a *non*; if he is, he will conduct us all to pieces."

Still her fear was not very active; it did not prevent her having a good time. She saw that her father was comfortable, and this fact reassured her somewhat. If they were going to meet with a dreadful accident, wouldn't he be likely to know it?

She began to look about her for something diverting. At no great distance was a little baby in a blue cloak. Not a very

attractive baby, but a great deal better than none.

“Papa, there’s more room on the seat by that lady’s bandbox. Mayn’t I ask to take care of her baby?”

“Yes, dear, if she is willing.”

Dotty danced down the aisle, thinking as she went,—

“My father lets me do every single thing. If we had mamma with us, *sometimes* she’d say, No.”

The tired woman greeted Miss Dimple cordially. She was not only willing, but very well pleased to have the uneasy baby taken out of her arms. Dotty drew off her gloves, and laid the little one’s head tenderly against her cheek. Baby looked wonderfully into the bright eyes bending above him, reached up a chubby hand, caught Dotty’s hat, and twitched it towards the left ear.

“Sweetest cherub!” said the fond mother, as if the child had done a good deed, “Take off your hat, little girl. I’ll hang it in the rack.”

Dotty was glad to obey. But baby was just as well satisfied with his new friend’s hair as he had been with the hat. It was capable of being pulled ; and that is a quality which delights the heart of infancy. Dotty bore the pain heroically, till she be-thought herself of appearances ; for, being among so many people, she did not wish to look like a gypsy. She smoothed back her tangled locks as well as she could, and tried every art of fascination to attract the baby’s attention to something else.

“ You are a pretty little girl, and a nice little girl,” said the gratified mother. “ You have a wonderful faculty for ’tending babies. Now, do you think, darling, you could take

care of him a few minutes alone, and let me try to get a nap? I am very tired, for I got up this morning before sunrise, and had baking to do."

"O, yes'm," replied Dotty, overflowing with good nature; "you can go to sleep just as well as not. Baby likes me—don't you, baby? And we'll play pat-a-cake all so nice!"

"It isn't every day I see such a handsome, obliging little dear," remarked the oily-tongued woman, as she folded up a green and yellow plaid shawl, and put it on the arm of the seat for a pillow. "I should like to know what your name is; and some time, perhaps, I can tell your mother how kind you were to my baby."

"My name is Alice Parlin," replied our enraptured heroine, "and I live in Portland. I'm going out West, where the Hoojers live. I—"

Dotty stopped herself just in time to avoid "putting on airs."

"H—m! *I thought* I had seen you before. Well, your mother is proud of you; I know she is," remarked the new acquaintance, settling herself for a nap.

Dotty looked at her as she lay curled in an ungraceful heap, with her eyes closed. It was a hard, disagreeable face. Dotty did not know why it was unpleasing. She only compared it with the child's usual standard, and thought, "She is not so handsome as my mamma," and went on making great eyes at the baby.

She was not aware that the person she was obliging was Mrs. Lovejoy, an old neighbor of the Parlins, who had once been very angry with Susy, saying sarcastic words to her, which even now Susy could not recall without a quiver of pain.

For some time Dotty danced the lumpish baby up and down, sustained in her tedious task by remembering the honeyed compliments its mother had given her.

“I should think they *would* be proud of me at home; but nobody ever said so before. O, dear, what a homely baby! Little bits of eyes, like huckleberries. ’Twill have to wear a head-dress when it grows up, for it hasn’t any hair. I’m glad it isn’t my brother, for then I should have to hold him the whole time, and he weighs more’n I do.”

Dotty sighed heavily.

“That woman’s gone to sleep. She’ll dream it’s night, and p’rhaps she won’t wake up till we get to Boston. Hush-a-by, baby, your cradle is green! O, dear, my arms’ll ache off.”

A boy approached with a basket of pop-

corn and other refreshments. Dotty remembered that she had in her pocket the means to purchase very many such luxuries. But how was she to find the way to her pocket? Baby required both hands, and undivided attention. Dotty looked at the boy imploringly. He snapped his fingers at her little charge, and passed on. She looked around for her father. He was at the other end of the car, talking politics with a group of gentlemen.

“Please stop,” said she, faintly, and the boy came to her elbow again. “I want some of that pop-corn so much!” was the plaintive request. “I could buy it if you’d hold this baby till I put my hand in my pocket.”

The youth laughed, but, for the sake of “making a trade,” set down his basket and took the “infant terrible.” There was an

instant attack upon his hair, which was so long and straggling as to prove an easy prey to the enemy.

“Hurry, you!” said he, to Dotty, with juvenile impatience. “I can’t stand any more of this nonsense.”

Dotty did hurry; but before she received the baby again he had been well shaken, and his temper was aroused; he objected to being punished for such a harmless amusement as uprooting a little hair. There was one thing certain: if his eyes were small, his lungs were large enough, and perfectly sound.

Startled by his lusty cries, his mamma opened one of her eyes, but immediately closed it again when she saw that Dotty was bending all the powers of her mind to the effort of soothing “the cherub.”

“I do wish my dear mamma *was* travel-



DOTTY IN THE CARS. Page 44.



ling with us," thought the perplexed little girl. "She wouldn't 'low me to hold this naughty, naughty baby forever 'n' ever! Because, you know, she never'd go off to the other end of the car and talk pol'tics."

The little girl chirruped, cooed, and sang; all in vain. She danced the baby "up, up, up, and down, down, downy," till its blue cloak was twisted like a shaving. Still it cried, and its unnatural mother refused to hear.

"I never 'll hold another baby as long's I live. When ladies come to our house, I'll look and see if they've brought one, and if they have I'll always run up stairs and hide."

As a last resort, she gave the little screamer some pop-corn. Why not? It refused to be comforted with other devices. How should she know that it was unable to

chew, and was in the habit of swallowing buttons, beads, and other small articles whole?

Baby clutched at the puffy white kernels, and crowed. It knew now, for the first time, what it had been crying for. There was a moment of peace, during which Master Freddie pushed a handful of corn as far as the trap-door which opened into his throat. Then there was a struggle, a gasp, a throwing up of the little hands; the trap-door had opened, but the corn had not dropped through; there was not space enough. In other words, Freddy was choking.

The young nurse was so frightened that she almost let the small sufferer slip out of her arms. She screamed so shrilly that half a dozen people started from their seats to see what was the matter. Of course the sleepy woman was awake in a moment. All

she said, as she took the child out of Dotty's arms, was this:—

“You good-for-nothing, careless little thing! Don't you know any better than to choke my baby?”

As Dotty really supposed the little one's last hour had come, and she herself had been its murderer, her distress and terror are not to be told. She paced the aisle, wringing her hands, while Mrs. Lovejoy put her finger down Freddie's throat and patted his back.

In a very short time the mischief was undone; the child caught its breath, and blinked its little watery eyes, while its face faded from deep magenta to its usual color of dough.

Dotty was immensely relieved.

“Bess its 'ittle heart,” cried Mrs. Lovejoy, pressing it close to her travelling cape,

while several of the passengers looked on, quite interested in the scene. "Did the naughty, wicked girlie try to choke its muzzer's precious baby? We'll w'ip her; so we will! She shan't come near my lovey-dovey with her snarly hair."

Mrs. Lovejoy's remarks pricked like a nosegay of thistles. They were not only sharp in themselves, but they were uttered with such evident displeasure that every word stung.

Dotty was creeping away with her head down, her "snarly hair" veiling her sorrowful eyes, when she remembered her hat, and meekly asked Mrs. Lovejoy to restore it.

"Take it," was the ungracious reply, "and don't you ever offer to hold another baby till you have a little common sense."

Dotty walked away with her fingers in

her mouth, more angry than grieved, and conscious that all eyes were upon her.

“I didn’t mean to scold you, child,” called the woman after her; “only you might have killed my baby, and I think you’re big enough to know better.”

This last sentence, spoken more gently, was intended to heal all wounds; but it had no such effect. Dotty was sure everybody had heard it, and was more ashamed than ever. She had never before met with any one so ill bred as Mrs. Lovejoy. She supposed her own conduct had been almost criminal, whereas Mrs. Lovejoy was really much more at fault than herself. A woman who has no tenderness for a well-meaning little girl, no forgiveness for her thoughtless mistakes, can never be regarded as a lady.

Thus, for the second time that day, Dotty had met with misfortune.

Her father knew nothing of what had occurred, and she had not much to say when he offered a penny for her thoughts.

"I oughtn't to have given that baby any corn," said she, briefly; "but he didn't choke long."

"Where are your gloves, child?"

Dotty looked in her pocket, and shook her head.

"You must have left them in the seat you were in. You'd better go after them, my daughter, and then come back and brush your hair."

"O, papa, I'd rather go to Indiana with my hands naked. That woman doesn't like me."

Mr. Parlin gave a glance at the wretched little face, and went for the gloves himself. They were not to be found, though Mrs. Lovejoy was very polite indeed to assist in

the search. They had probably fallen out of the window.

“Don’t take it to heart, my little Alice,” said Mr. Parlin, who was very sorry to see so many shadows on his young daughter’s face so early in the day. “We’ll buy a new pair in Boston. We will think of something pleasant. Let us see: when are you going to read your first letter?”

“O, Susy said the very last thing before I got to Boston. You’ll tell me when it’s the very last thing? I’m so glad Susy wrote it! for now I can be ’expecting it all the rest of the way.”

CHAPTER IV.

“PIGEON PIE POSTPONED.”

THIS is Susy's letter, which lay in Mr. Parlin's pocket-book, and which he gave his impatient little daughter fifteen minutes before the cars stopped:—

“MY DEAR LITTLE SISTER: This is for you to read when you have almost got to Boston; and it is a story, because I know you will be tired.

“Once there was a wolf—I've forgotten what his name was. At the same time there were some men, and they were monks. Monks have their heads shaved. They

found this wolf. They didn't see why he wouldn't make as good a monk as anybody. They tied him and then they wanted him to say his prayers, patter, patter, all in Latin.

“He opened his mouth, and then they thought it was coming; but what do you think? All he said was, ‘Lamb! lamb!’ And he looked where the woods were.

“So they couldn't make a monk of him, because he wanted to eat lambs, and he wouldn't say his prayers.

“Mother read that to me out of a blue book.

“Good by, darling. From
“SISTER SUSY.”

“What do you think of that?” said Mr. Parlin, as he finished reading the letter aloud.

“It is so queer, papa. I don’t think those monkeys were very bright.”

“Monks, my child.”

“O, I thought you said monkeys.”

“No, monks are men—Catholics.”

“Well, if they were men, I should think they’d know a wolf couldn’t say his prayers. But I s’pose it isn’t true.”

“No, indeed. It is a fable, written to show that it is of no use to expect people to do things which they have not the power to do. The wolf could catch lambs, but he could not learn his letters. So my little Alice can dress dollies, but she does not know how to take care of babies.”

“O, papa, I didn’t choke him *very* much.”

“I was only telling you I do not think you at all to blame. Little girls like you are not expected to have judgment like grown women. If you only do the best

you know how, it is all that should be required of you."

Dotty's face emerged from the cloud. She looked away down the aisle at Mrs. Lovejoy, who was patting the uninteresting baby to sleep.

"Well," thought she, her self-esteem reviving, "I wish that woman only could know I wasn't to blame! I don't believe *she* could have take care of that baby when she was six years old."

"Here we are at Boston," said Mr. Parlin. "Is your hat tied on? Keep close to me, and don't be afraid of the crowd."

Dotty was not in the least afraid. She was not like Prudy, who, on the same journey, had clung tremblingly to her father at every change of cars. In Dotty's case there was more danger of her being reckless than too timid.

They went to a hotel. Mr. Parlin's business would detain him an hour or two, he said; after that he would take his little daughter to walk on the Common; and next morning, bright and early, they would proceed on their journey.

It was the first time Dotty had ever dined at a public house. A bill of fare was something entirely new to her. She wondered how it happened that the Boston printers knew what the people in that hotel were about to have for dinner.

Mr. Parlin looked with amusement at the demure little lady beside him. Not a sign of curiosity did she betray, except to gaze around her with keen eyes, which saw everything, even to the pattern of the napkins. Some time she would have questions to ask, but not now.

“And what would you like for dinner, Alice?”

Mr. Parlin said this as they were sipping their soup. Dotty glanced at the small table before them, which offered scarcely anything but salt-cellars and castors, and then at the paper her father held in his hand. She was about to reply that she would wait till the table was ready; but as there was one man seated opposite her, and another standing at the back of her chair, she merely said,—

“I don’t know, papa.”

“A-la-mode beef; fricasseed chicken; Calcutta curry,” read her mischievous father from the bill, as fast as he could read; “macaroni; salsify; flummery; sirup of cream. You see it is hard to make a choice, dear. Escaloped oysters; pigeon pie postponed.”

“I’ll take some of that, papa,” broke in Dotty.

“What, dear?”

“Some of the pigeon pie 'sponed,” answered Dotty, in a low voice, determined to come to a decision of some sort. It was not likely to make much difference what she should choose, when everything was alike wonderful and strange.

“Pigeon pie postponed,” said Mr. Parlin to the man at the back of Dotty’s chair; “turkey with oysters for me.”

The polite waiter smiled so broadly that he showed two long rows of white teeth. It could not be Dotty who amused him. Her conduct was all that is prim and proper. She sat beside her papa as motionless as a waxen baby, her eyes rolling right and left, as if they were jerked by a secret wire. It certainly could not have been Dotty. Then what was it the man saw which was funny?

“Only one pigeon pie in the house, sir,” said he, trying to look very solemn, “and

if the young lady will be pleased to wait, I'll bring it to her in a few minutes. No such dish on any of the other bills of fare. A rarity for this special day, sir. Anything else, miss, while you wait?"

Mr. Parlin looked rather surprised. There had been no good reason given for not bringing the pie at once; however, he merely asked Dotty to choose again; and this time she chose "tomato steak," at a venture.

There were two gentlemen at the opposite side of the table, and one of them watched Dotty with interest.

"Her mother has taken great pains with her," he thought; "she handles her knife and fork very well. Where have I seen that child before?"

While he was still calling to mind the faces of various little girls of his acquaintance, and trying to remember which face

belonged to Dotty, the waiter arrived with the “pigeon pie postponed.” He had chosen the time when most of the people had finished their first course, and the clinking of dishes was not quite so hurried as it had been a little while before. The table at which Mr. Parlin sat was nearly in the centre of the room. As the waiter approached with the pie, the same amused look passed over his face once more.

He set the dish upon the table near Mr. Parlin, who proceeded to cut a piece for Miss Dimple. As the knife went into the pie, the crust seemed to move; and lo, “when the pie was opened,” out flew a pigeon alive and well!

The bird at first hopped about the table in a frightened way, a little blind and dizzy from being shut up in such a dark prison; but a few breaths of fresh air revived him,

and he flew merrily around the room, to the surprise and amusement of the guests. It was a minute or two before any of them understood what it meant. Then they began to laugh and say they knew why the pie was "postponed:" it was because the pigeon was not willing to be eaten alive.

It passed as a capital joke; but I doubt if Dotty Dimple appreciated it. She looked at the hollow crust, and then at the purple-crested dove, and thought a hotel dinner was even more peculiar than she had supposed. Did they have "live pies" every day? How did they bake them without even scorching the pigeons? But she busied herself with her nuts and raisins, and asked no questions.

At four o'clock she went with her father to see the Public Gardens and other places of interest, and to buy a pair of new gloves.

On the Common they met one of the gentlemen who had sat opposite them at dinner. He bowed as they were passing, and said, with a smile,—

“Can this be my little friend, Miss Prudy Parlin?”

“It is her younger sister, Alice,” replied her father.

“And I am Major Benjamin Lazelle, of St. Louis,” said the gentleman.

After this introduction, the three walked along in company, and seemed to feel like old acquaintances; for Major Lazelle had once escorted Mrs. Clifford on a journey to Maine, and since that time had been well known to the Clifford family. Mr. Parlin was glad to learn that he would start for St. Louis on the next day, and travel with himself and daughter nearly as far as they went. Major Lazelle was also well pleased, and

began at once to make friends with Miss Dimple. The little girl had recovered from her trials of the morning, and was so delighted with all she saw that she "couldn't walk on two feet." She preferred to hop, skip, and jump.

"O, papa, papa, what *are* those little dears, just the color of my kid gloves?"

"Those are deer, my child."

"Are they? I *said* they were dears—didn't I? If they were *my* dears, I'd keep them in a parlor, and let them lie on a silk quilt with a velvet pillow—wouldn't you?"

"This little girl reminds me strikingly of my old friend Prudy," said Major Lazelle, taking her hand. "When I saw her across the table I thought, 'Ah, now, there is a sweet little child who makes me remember something pleasant.' After a while I knew

what that pleasant thing was—it was little Prudy."

Dotty looked up at Major Lazelle with a smile.

"She came to see me when I was in a hospital in Indiana. At that time I was blind."

"Blind, sir?"

"Yes; but I see quite well now. Afterwards I met your sister on the street in Portland, and she spoke to me. I was very weak and miserable, for I had just been ill of a fever; but the sight of her bright face made me feel strong again."

Dotty's fingers closed around Major Lazelle's with a firmer clasp. If he liked Prudy, then she should certainly like him.

"Shall I tell you of some verses I repeated to myself when I looked at your dear little sister?"

“Yes, sir, if you please.”

“‘Why, a stranger, when he sees her
In the street even, smileth stilly,
Just as you would at a lily.

“‘And if any painter drew her,
He would paint her unaware,
With the halo round her hair.’

“I dare say you do not understand poetry
very well, Miss Alice?”

“No, sir. I s’pose I should if I knew
what the words meant.”

“Very likely. Is your sister Prudy well?
and how do you two contrive to amuse your-
selves all the day long?”

“Yes, sir, she’s well; and we don’t amuse
ourselves at all.”

“Indeed! But you play, I presume.”

“Yes, sir, we do.”

“I feel sure you are just such another

dear little girl as Prudy is, and it gives me pleasure to know you."

Dotty dropped her head. She was glad her father was too far off to hear this remark.

"Just such another dear little girl as Prudy is!"

Alas! Dotty knew better than that. She was not sure she ought not to tell Major Lazelle he had made a great mistake. But while she was pondering upon it, they met a blind man, a lame man, and a party of school-girls; and she had so much use for her eyes that she did not speak again for five minutes.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAJOR'S JOKE.

WHILE Dotty was dressing next morning, she fell to thinking again of her own importance as a young lady travelling *almost* all alone by herself; and then it occurred to her that Jennie Vance, the judge's daughter, had never been any farther than Boston.

“ When she comes to Portland next winter to see her aunties that live there, then I'll talk to her all about my travelling out West. But I needn't tell her how that baby choked, nor how that naughty Dollyphus made fun of me. No, indeed ! ”

As she spoke she was pouring water into

the wash-bowl; but her indignation towards Mrs. Lovejoy and "Dollyphus" made her hand unsteady; the pitcher came suddenly against the edge of the bowl, whereupon its nose and part of its body flew off into space. Dotty held the handle, and looked at the ruins in astonishment.

"Did *I* do that?"

She had no time to spend in lamentation.

"I don't want to let my papa know what I've done," thought she, giving the last hasty touches to her toilet: "he'll have to go and pay the man that keeps house; and then I'm afraid he'll think, if his little girl keeps choking folks and breaking things, I ought to stay at home."

But Dotty was too well grounded in the "white truth" to hesitate long. She could not hide the accident and be happy. When she mentioned it to her father, he did not say, as some fathers might have done,—

“ You careless child ! Your sister *Prudy* didn’t break a pitcher or lose a pair of gloves all the way to Indiana.”

He and Mrs. Parlin were both afraid that, if they spoke in this manner, their children might infer that carelessness is just as sinful as falsehood and ill temper ; they wished them to know there is a vast difference. So Mr. Parlin only said,—

“ Broken the pitcher ? I’m sorry ; but you did right to tell me. Give me your hand, and let us go to breakfast.”

Major Lazelle was at table. He patted Dotty’s head, and said she looked like “ a sweet-pea on tiptoe for a flight.” He seemed very fond of quoting poetry ; and nothing could have been more pleasing to Dotty, who loved to hear high-sounding words, even if they did soar above her head.

The party of three started in due time on their journey. It was very much the same thing it had been yesterday ; boys with tea-kettles of ice-water, boys with baskets of fruit and lozenges, and boys with newspapers. There was a long train of cars, and every car was crowded.

“O, papa,” sighed Dotty, after she had tried to count the passengers, and had been obliged to give it up because there were so many stepping off at every station, and so many more stepping in. “O, papa, where are all these people going to ?”

And in the afternoon she repeated the question, adding,—

“I shouldn’t think there’d be anybody left in any of the houses.”

By the time they reached Albany, she had seen so much of the world that she felt fairly worn out, and her head hummed like a hive of bees.

“I didn’t know, papa,—I never knew,—
there were so many folks!”

The next letter Dotty had to read was from Prudy. It was merely a poem copied very carefully. You may skip it if you like; but the major said it was exquisite, and I think the major must have been a good judge, for I have the same opinion myself!

“LITTLE DANDELION.

“Gay little Dandelion
Lights up the meads,
Swings on her slender foot,
Telleth her beads ;
Lists to the robin’s note
Poured from above ;
Wise little Dandelion
Cares not for love.

“Cold lie the daisy banks,
Clad but in green,
Where in the Mays agone
Bright hues were seen ;

Wild pinks are slumbering,
Violets delay ;
True little Dandelion
Greeteth the May.

“Brave little Dandelion !
Fast falls the snow,
Bending the daffodil’s
Haughty head low.
Under that fleecy tent,
Careless of cold,
Blithe little Dandelion
Counteth her gold.

“Meek little Dandelion
Groweth more fair,
Till dies the amber dew
Out of her hair.
High rides the thirsty sun,
Fiercely and high ;
Faint little Dandelion
Closeth her eye.

“Pale little Dandelion
In her white shroud,
Heareth the angel breeze
Call from the cloud.
Fairy plumes fluttering
Make no delay ;
Little winged Dandelion
Soareth away.”

This night was spent at Albany ; and, as the evening closed with a little adventure, I will tell you about it ; and that will be all that it is necessary to relate of Dotty's journey.

Mr. Parlin, Major Lazelle, and our heroine were sitting, after their late tea, in a private parlor. It was time Dotty was asleep ; but, while she was waiting for her papa, Major Lazelle held her on his knee. Mr. Parlin was writing letters, and did not listen to the conversation going on between his little daughter and her friend. They commenced by talking about Zip. Dotty said he knew as much as a boy.

“ I did think once he was my brother. And now I’m glad I didn’t have a real brother ; for if he *had* been, p’rhaps he’d have burned up our house with a cracker.”

“ So you think little girls are nicer than little boys ? ”

“O, yes, sir ; don’t you ?”

Dotty spoke as if there could be no doubt about it.

“I like good little girls,” said Major Lazelle, “such as can ride a whole day in the cars without growing cross.”

This compliment gratified Dotty. She felt that she deserved it, for she had kept her temper admirably ever since she left home.

“I am sure you will grow up, one of these days, to be a very good woman,” continued Major Lazelle, looking with an admiring smile at the graceful little girl seated on his knee. “You tell me you have never been at school. I hope you do not mean to frolic all your life ? What were little girls made for, do you think ?”

Dotty reflected a moment.

“What are little girls made for, sir ?”

Why, they are made to play, 'cause they can't play when they grow to be ladies."

The major laughed.

"Pretty well said! You're rather too shrewd for such an 'old mustache' as I. So little girls are made to play? Then suppose we two have a game. Let us play chip-chop."

Dotty was becoming sleepy, but aroused herself, and patted her little soft hands as hard as she could, tossing them hither and thither, sometimes hitting her companion's thumb, sometimes his little finger. Major Lazelle laughed, and then she laughed too; for when he tried to strike her hands, he said it was like aiming at a pair of rose-leaves fluttering in the air.

The chip-chop was a complete failure; but it had set them both in great glee. If truth be told, they became excessively rude.

“Now, sir,” said Dotty, as they ran across the room, playing a game of romps, “if you do catch me again, I’ll—O, dear, I don’t know what I’ll do !”

Mr. Parlin looked up from his letter a little annoyed, for the floor was shaking so that he could scarcely write.

“Do not be rude, my daughter,” said he, though he knew very well the major was really the one to be chided.

But his warning came a minute too late. Major Lazelle had caught Dotty, and she had thrown up both hands to clutch at his hair. She meant to give it one desperate pulling; she did not care if she hurt him a little; she even hoped he might cry out and beg her to stop.

But the oddest thing happened. If she had gone to bed at the usual time, and fallen asleep, then this would have been her dream.

But no, she *supposed* she was awake; and what now?

As she seizes two locks of Major Lazelle's hair, one in each hand, and pulled them both as if she meant to draw them out by the roots, out they came! Yes, entirely out! And more than that, all the rest of the man's hair came too! His head was left as smooth as an apple.

You see at once how it was. He wore a wig, and just for play had slyly unfastened it, and allowed Miss Dotty to pull it off.

The perfect despair on her little face amused him vastly; but he did not smile; he looked very severe.

"See what you have done!" said he, rubbing his bald head as if it were just ready to bleed. "See what you have done to me, you cruel girl!"

Major Lazelle's entire head of hair lay at

her feet as brown and wavy as ever it was. Dotty looked at it with horror. The idea of scalping a man !

For a whole minute she lost the power of speech. Then she gasped out,—

“ O, dear ! dear ! dear ! I didn’t know your hair was so tender ! ”

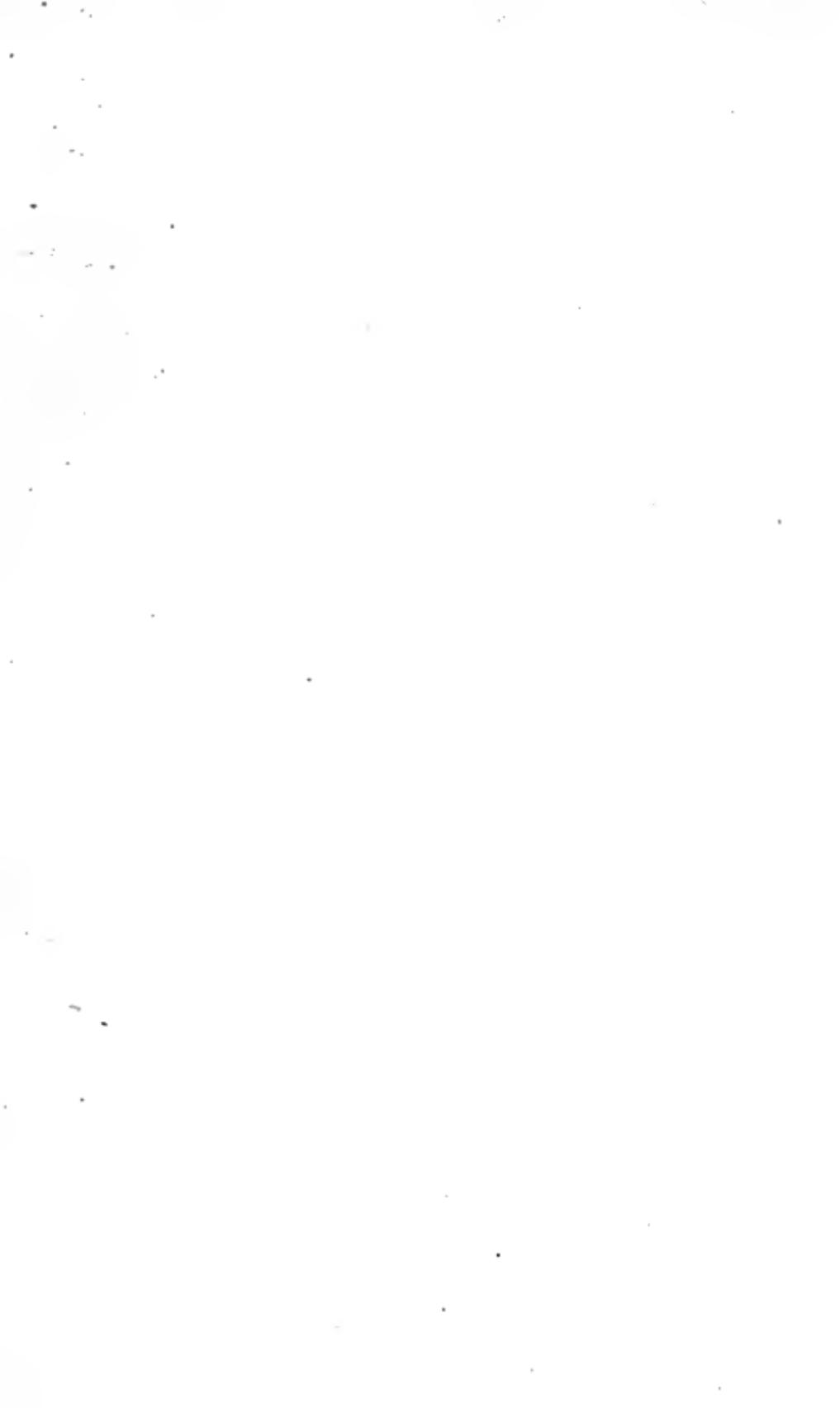
The major had been crowding his hand-kerchief into his mouth ; but at this he could no longer restrain himself, nor could Mr. Parlin help joining in the laugh.

The little girl was more bewildered than ever. She put her hand to her own head, to make sure it was safe, for it felt as airy as a dandelion top.

Then Major Lazelle explained to her in a few words what a wig is, and how it is fastened to the head. Dotty understood it all in a moment, but was too much chagrined to make any reply.



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“I am several years younger than your papa, my dear; so you think it strange to see me bald; but I have had two dreadful fevers, and they have run away with every bit of my hair.”

Dotty would not even look up to see Major Lazelle replace his wig. Her dignity had been wounded.

“Come, sit on my knee, Pussy, and let me tell you some more about it.”

“No, I thank you, sir,” replied she, walking the floor with the air of an injured princess. “No, I thank you, sir.”

“How, now, little one? You don’t mean to be angry with me for a little joke?”

“No, I thank you.”

And that was all Dotty would say. She was wise enough to know she was too angry to speak.

“Ah, ha! temper, I see!” thought Major

Lazelle; "I did not suspect it from that quarter."

If the young gentleman had only known how hard the little girl was struggling just then to control herself, he would have liked her better than ever.

Her father chided her next morning for taking a joke so seriously. Dotty replied with a deep sigh,—

"Papa, that major 'sposes I'm only five years old! That's what Dollyphus s'posed! I don't like it, papa, when I can travel so well; and how'd *I* know what a wig was, when you and mamma never had any?"

But Dotty smiled as benevolently as she could when she met the major again. He was a little afraid of her, however. He did not enjoy playing with her as he had enjoyed it before. He now felt obliged to be on his guard, lest she should take offence.

The rest of her journey—though Dotty did not know it—was not quite so delightful as it might have been if she had only laughed with good humor when the lively major let her pull his hair out by the roots.

But the cars went “singing through the forest, and rattling over ridges,” till it was time to part from the pleasant man with a wig. Then they went on, “shooting under arches, rambling over bridges,” till Dotty and her papa had come to their journey’s end. We will say it was the town of Quinn.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW FACES.

THE Cliffords lived a little way out of town. Mr. Parlin took a carriage at the depot, and he and Dotty had a very pleasant drive to "Aunt 'Ria's."

The little girl was rather travel-stained. Her gloves were somewhat ragged at the tips, from her habit of twitching them so much ; and they were also badly soiled with fruit and candy. Her hair was as smooth as hands could make it ; but alas for the "style" hat which had left Portland in triumph ! It had reached Indiana in disgrace. Its tipsy appearance was due to getting

stepped on, and being caught in showers. Dotty's neat travelling dress was defaced by six large grease spots. Where they had come from Dotty could not conjecture, unless "that sick lady with a bottle had spilled some of her cod-oil on it out of a spoon."

The child had intended to astonish her relatives by her tidy array; but, after all her pains, she had arrived out West in a very sorry plight.

"Now, which side must I look for the house, papa?"

"At your right hand, my dear. The first thing you will see is the conservatory, and then a stone house."

"My right hand," thought Dotty; "that's east; but which is my right hand?"

She always knew after she had thought a moment. It was the one which did not have

the "shapest thumb;" that is, the *misshapen* one she had pounded once by mistake, instead of an oilnut.

"O, yes, papa! See the flowers! the flowers! And only to think they don't know who's coming! P'rhaps they're drinking tea, or gone visiting, or something."

The Cliffords were not at tea. Grace and Cassy were readying "Our Boys and Girls" in the summer-house, with their heads close together; Horace was in the woods fishing; Mr. Clifford at his office; his wife in her chamber, ruffling a pink cambric frock for wee Katie, rocking as she sewed.

As for Katie, she was marching about the grounds under an old umbrella. It was only the skeleton of an umbrella—dry bones, wires, and a crooked handle. Through the open sides the little one was plainly to be seen; and Mr. Parlin thought she looked

like that flower we have in our gardens, which peeps out from a host of little tendrils, and is called the "lady in the bower."

Hearing a carriage coming, the "lady in the bower" rushed to the gate, flourishing the black bones of the umbrella directly in the horse's face.

"Dotty has camed! She has camed!" shouted the little creature, dropping the umbrella, falling over it, springing up again, and running with flying feet to spread the news.

Nobody believed Dotty had "camed;" it seemed an improbable story; but Grace and Cassy had heard the wheels, and they ran through the avenue into the house to make sure it was nobody but one of the neighbors.

"Why, indeed, and indeed, it *is* Dotty; and if here isn't Uncle Edward too!" cried Grace, tossing back her curls, and dancing

down the front steps. "Ma, ma, here is Uncle Edward Parlin!"

"I sawed um first! I sawed um first!" screamed little Flyaway, thrusting the point of the umbrella between Dotty's feet, and throwing her over.

"Can I believe my eyes!" said Mrs. Clifford's voice from the head of the stairs; and down she rushed, with open arms, to greet her guests.

Then there was so much kissing, and so much talking, that nobody exactly knew what anybody else said; and Katie added to the confusion by fluttering in and out, and every now and then breaking into a musical laugh, which the mocking-bird, not to be outdone, caught up and echoed. It was a merry, merry meeting.

"You dee papa bringed you—didn't him, Dotty?" said Katie, flying at her cousin with

the feather duster, as soon as Grace had taken away the umbrella, and pointing her remarks with the end of the handle.

“ You’s Uncle Eddard’s baby—that’s what is it.”

“ O, you darling Flyaway!” said Dotty, “ if you *wouldn’t* stick that handle right *into* my eyes!”

“ I’s going to give you sumpin!” returned Katie, putting her hand in her pocket, and producing a very soft orange, which had been used for a football. “ It’s a ollinge. You can eat um, ‘cause I gived um to you.”

“ Thank you, O, thank you, Flyaway: how glad I am to see you! You look just the same, and no different.”

“ O, no, I’m is growin’ homely,” replied the baby, cheerfully, “ velly homely; Hollis said so.”

By the time Dotty's crushed hat was off, and she had made herself ready for tea, trying to hide three of the six grease-spots with her hands, Horace appeared with a little birch switch across his shoulder, strung with fish. The fish were few and small; but Horace was just as tired, he said, as if he had caught a whale. He did not say he was glad to see his young cousin; but joy shone all over his face.

"We'll have times—won't we, little Top-knot?" said he, taking Katie up between his fingers, as if she had been a pinch of snuff.

"Is you *found* of ollinges, Dotty?" asked Flyaway, with an anxious glance at the yellow fruit in Dotty's hand, still untasted.

After tea the orange lay on the lounge.

"I's goin' to give you a ollinge," said Katie, presenting it again, as if it were a

new one. But after she had given it away three times, she thought her duty was done.

“ If you please um,” said she, coaxingly, “ I dess *I'll* eat a slice o' that ollinge.”

So she had the whole.

“ Dotty, have you seen Phebe?” asked Horace.

“ No; where does she live?”

“ O, out in the kitchen. Prudy saw her when she was here, ever so long ago. She hasn't faded any since.”

“ O, now I remember, she's a niggro, as black as a *sip*.”

“ Yes; come out and see her. She's famous for making candy. She learned that of Barby.”

“ Who is Barby?”

“ The Dutch girl we had before Katinka came.”

Dotty went into the kitchen with Horace

to watch the candy-making. This was a favorite method with him of entertaining visitors.

Phebe Dolan was a young colored girl, who had a very desirable home at Mrs. Clifford's, but who always persisted in going about the house in a dejected manner, as if some one had treated her unkindly. For all that, she was very happy; and under her solemn face was a deal of quiet fun.

Katinka Dinkelspiel was a good-natured German girl, with a face as round as a full moon, and eyes as expressive as two blots of blue paint. She wore her fair hair rolled in front on each side into a puff like a capital O. Dotty looked at her in surprise. She was very unlike Norah, who wore bright ribbons on her head. And Katinka talked broken English, stirring up her words in such a way that the sentences were like

Chinese puzzles ; they needed to be taken apart and put together differently.

“ Please to make the door too,” she said to Horace ; and it was half a minute before Dotty understood that she was asking him to shut it.

“ This is my cousin Dotty Dimple, girls ; the handsomest of the family ; but not the best one — are you, though ? ” at the same time giving Miss Dimple a chair.

“ How d’ye, miss ? ” said Phebe, mournfully.

Katinka said nothing, but patted the letter O on the right side of her head.

“ O, Phib, my mother says if you are not too tired, you may make some candy ; she said so, candidly.”

Horace was just old enough to delight in puns.

Now, this was a pleasant message to

Phebe; she would have been glad to keep her fingers in molasses half the time. Still it seemed to Dotty, as she saw the rolling of the black eyes, that Phebe was quite discouraged.

“I s’pose she doesn’t like candy,” thought she; “I heard of a girl once that didn’t.”

Rolling her sad eyes again and again, Phebe went to draw the molasses, and soon had it boiling on the stove.

“There,” said Horace, rubbing his hands, “I told Dotty if anybody knew how to make candy ‘twas Phebe Dolan. Give us the nut-cracker, and I’ll have the pecans ready in no time.”

This time Phebe’s eyes twinkled. As soon as the molasses would pour from the spoon in just the right way, with little films like spiders’ webs floating from it, then Phebe said it was done, and Horace called



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Grace and Cassy. Phebe stirred in some soda with an air of solemnity, then poured half the contents of the kettle into a buttered platter, and the other half into a second platter lined with pecan-meats. Then she took the whole out of doors to cool.

“I’ll tell you what I’m thinking about,” said Dotty, as the girl left the room;—“what has she got on her head?”

“Why, hair, to be sure,” replied Grace. “Wool, I should call it,” corrected Horace. “Because I didn’t know,” faltered Dotty, —“I didn’t know but ‘twas a wig.”

“What made you think ‘twas a wig, Dotty?”

“O, there was a man wore one in the cars; it looked just like anybody’s hair, only he tied it on with a button. He knew you and Horace.”

“Me and Horace? Who could it have been?”

"He's the major; his name is Lazelle."

"O, I remember him," said Grace and Horace together. "Does he wear a wig? He isn't old at all."

"He *calls* himself 'an old mustache,'" returned Dotty, "for he said so to me. He wears one of those *hair-lips*, and a wig."

"And he's as blind as a post?"

"O, no, he can see things now. I liked him, for he gave me all the apples and peaches I could eat."

"I reckon it did him good to go to the war," exclaimed Horace, "for I remember, when I was a little fellow, how he boxed my ears!"

"He has suffered a great deal since then," said the gentle Cassy, thoughtfully. "You know people generally grow better by suffering."

"Dotty dear, you can't keep your eyes

open," said Grace, after the candy had been pulled. "I don't believe it will make *you* any better to suffer. I'm going to put you to bed."

"And here I am," thought Dotty, as she laid her tired head on the pillow, "out West, under a sketo bar. Got here safe. I ought to have thanked God a little harder in my prayer."

CHAPTER VII.

WAKING UP OUT WEST.

DOTTY was wakened next morning by a variety of sounds. The mocking-bird, the canary, the hens, and Horace's guinea pig were astir, and wished their little world to be aware of it. Flyaway was dressed and running about, making herself generally useful.

Before the tired young traveller knew where she was, a little hand was busy at the door knob, and a baby voice called out,—

“Dottee, Dottee, is you waked up?”

“O, now I know where I am! This is Aunt 'Ria's house, and that little snip of a

Flyaway is trying to get in. O, dear, dear, how far off I am ! Prudy Parlin, I wonder if you're thinking about me?"

" Dottee ! Dottee !" called the small voice again.

" O, I s'pose that baby'll stand at the door all day."

But just then the knob turned, and in rushed Flyaway out of breath.

" Good-morning, Miss Topknot," said Dotty, addressing her by one of the dove-names Horace was so fond of using.

" O, I's pitty well," replied Flyaway, dancing across the room. " I didn't sleep any till las' night. I d'eamed awtul d'eams; so I kep' awake, and wouldn't go to sleep."

And into bed climbed the little one, laying her head, with its tangled floss, right across Dotty's face.

" Dear me !" sighed Dotty, rubbing the

floss out of her eyes. “Such hair! I should think *you* wore a wig! I’m sleepy; can’t you let me be?”

“You mus’ wake up, Dottee! *I* love to wake up; I can do it velly easy.”

Dotty, losing her patience, moved forward, pushing Katie towards the edge of the bed.

“O, ho! what a little bedstick! I’ll yole out!”

“I wish you would, Flyaway Clifford!”

No sooner said than done. Off rolled Flyaway, but alighted on her feet.

“O, my shale,” cried she, scrambling in again; “I fell down backboards. O, ho!”

Such good nature was not to be resisted. Sleepy Dotty waked up and smiled in spite of herself; and next minute her persecutor was skipping down stairs.

“Glad she’s gone. Now I’ll put on my

pretty morning dress ; Aunt 'Ria hung it up in the closet. I'm going to be a little lady all the time I'm out West, and not jump off of things and tear my clothes."

Then Dotty's mind strayed to a very different subject.

"It is so queer God is in this country just the same as He is in the State of Maine ! I said my prayers to Him before I started, and there He was and heard ; and now He's here and hears too ; I don't see how. You can't think without He sees your thoughts."

Dotty, brushing her hair, looked in the glass so intently that she did not observe her Aunt Maria, who had quietly entered the room. Mrs. Clifford was a wise woman, but she could not look into her niece's heart. She thought Dotty was admiring her own beauty in the mirror, whereas the child was not thinking of it at all.

What Mr. Beecher once said of little folks is very true :—

“ Ah, well, there is a world of things in children’s minds that grown-up people do not understand, though they too once were young.”

Mrs. Clifford went up to Dotty and kissed her. Then the little girl was startled from her musings, and passing down stairs with her hand in Mrs. Clifford’s, thought she should be perfectly happy if dear Prudy were only on the other side of her.

Everything she saw that was new or strange she had to stop and admire, thinking it was an article that could only belong out West.

“ O, auntie, what is this queer little thing with doors ?”

“ Grace’s cabinet, dear.”

“ Her *cabijen*,” exclaimed Flyaway, darting in from the next room.

"Good morning, Dotty Dimple," said Horace; "did my Guinea pig wake you? I lost him out. What a noise he made! I wish he was in Guinea, where he came from."

Dotty had never seen a Guinea pig. It was another curiosity, which promised to be more remarkable than Phebe or Katinka. She began to think coming West was like having one long play-day. Even the dining-room was a novelty, with the swinging fan suspended over the table to keep off flies.

"I have been wondering," said Mrs. Clifford, as she urned the coffee, "how we shall amuse our little Dotty while she is here."

"Fishing," suggested Horace.

"Nutting," said Grace.

"*Prudy* went to a *wedding* when she was in Indiana," remarked Dotty, in a low voice.

"We will try to get up a wedding then,"

said Horace; "but they are a little out of fashion now."

"We have been thinking," observed Mrs. Clifford, "of a nutting excursion for to-day. How would you like it, Edward?"

"Very much," replied Mr. Parlin. "I can spend but one day with you, and I would as lief spend it nutting as in any other way."

"Only one day, Uncle Edward!" cried Grace and Horace.

"Only one day, papa!" stammered Dotty, feeling like a little kitten who *did* have her paw on a mouse, but sees the mouse disappear down a hole.

"O, I shall leave you, my daughter. You will stay here a week or two, and meet me in Indianapolis."

Dotty was able to eat once more.

"Father, what are we to do for horses to go nutting with?" spoke up Horace. "Rob-

in raked this part of town yesterday with a fine-tooth comb, and couldn't find anything but an old clothes' horse, and that was past travelling."

"My son!"

Mr. Clifford's face said very plainly,—

"Not so flippant, my child!"

But the only remark he made was to the effect that there were doubtless horses to be found in the city at the stables.

"What about the infant, mamma?" said Grace. "Is she to be one of the party?"

When Katie was present she was sometimes mysteriously mentioned as "the infant." It was quite an undertaking to allow her to go; but Mrs. Clifford had yielded the point an hour or two before, out of regard to Horace's feelings. She knew the nutting party would be spoiled for him if his beloved little Topknot were left out.

“Is I goin’?” asked she, when she heard the joyful news. “Yes, I’m *are* goin’ to get some horse.”

“No, some pecans, you little Brown-brimmer.”

Katie had a dim suspicion that she owed this pleasure to her brother’s influence.

“Hollis,” said she, eagerly,—“Hollis, you may have the red part o’ my apple.”

This sounded like the very fulness of generosity, but was a hollow mockery; for by the “red part” she only meant the skin.

Mr. Clifford had one horse, and while Robin Sherwood was going to the city for another, Mrs. Clifford made ready the lunch.

Happy Dotty walked about, twirling a lock of her front hair, and watched Katinka cleaning the already nice paint, spilling here and there “little drops of water, little grains of sand.” She also observed the solemn yet

dextrous manner in which Phebe washed the breakfast dishes, and looked on with peculiar interest as Aunt Maria filled the basket.

First there were custards to be baked in little cups and freckled with nutmeg, to please Uncle Edward. Then there was a quantity of eggs to be boiled hard. As Mrs. Clifford dropped these one by one into a kettle of water, Katie ran to the back door, and cried out to the noisy hens,—

“Stop cacklerin’, chickie; we’ve got ‘em.”

Then, fearing she had not made herself understood, she added,—

“We’ve found your *aigs*, chickie; they was ror, but we’s goin’ to bake ‘em.”

Dotty was impressed with the beauty of the picnic basket and the delicacy of the food. Everything she saw was rose-colored to-day.

“O, Auut’Ria, I should think you’d like to live out West! Such splendid fruit cake!”

“I saw Fibby and my mamma make that,” said Flyaway, “out o’ cindamon and little clovers.”

“Clovers in cake?”

“Not red and white clovers; them little bitter kinds you know,” added the child, with a wry face.

There were four for each carriage. Dotty rode with her father, Mrs. Clifford, and Katie. Little Flyaway looked at the hired phaeton with contempt.

“It hasn’t any cap on, like my papa’s,” said she; but she was prevailed upon to ride in it because her mamma did.

Horace went with his father and the “cup and saucer,” as he called Grace and Cassy. He was in a state of irritation because his idolized Topknot was in the other carriage.

“ You can’t separate that cup and saucer,” growled he to himself. “ They’ll sit and talk privacy, I suppose; and I might have had Brown-brimmer if it hadn’t been for Cassy.”

CHAPTER VIII.

GOING NUTTING.

As they drove along "the plank road," farther and farther away from the city, Dotty saw more clearly than ever the wide difference between Indiana and Maine.

"Why, papa," said she, "did you ever breathe such a dust? It seems like snuff."

"It makes us almost as invisible as the 'tarn cap' we read of in German fairy tales," said Mrs. Clifford, tucking her brown veil under her chin.

She and Mr. Parlin both encouraged Dotty to talk; for they liked to hear her exclamations of wonder at things which to them seemed common-place enough.

“What did you call this road, Aunt 'Ria? Didn't you say it was made of boards? I don't see any boards.”

“The planks were put down so long ago, Dotty, that they are overlaid with earth.”

“But what did they put them down for?”

“You musser ask so many kestions, Dotty,” said Flyaway, severely; “you say ‘what’ too many times.”

“The planks were laid down, Dotty, on account of the depth of the mud.”

“Mud, Aunt 'Ria?”

“Yes, dear, dusty as it is now, at some seasons of the year the roads are so muddy that you might lose off your overshoes if it were not for the large beams which bridge over the crossings.”

“That reminds me,” said Mr. Parlin, “of the man who was seen sinking in the mud, and, when some one offered to help him

out, he replied, cheerfully, 'O, I shall get through; I have a horse under me.'"

"Why, was the horse 'way down out of sight, papa?"

"Where was the hossy, Uncle Eddard?"

"It was only a story, children. If the man said there was a horse under him, it was a figure of speech, which we call hyperbole; he only meant to state in a funny way that the mud was excessively deep."

"Is it right to tell hyperblees, papa? Because Jenpie Vance tells them a great deal. I didn't know the name of them before."

"No, Alice, it is not right to tell untrue things expecting to be believed—of course not."

"Well, *she* isn't believed. Nobody s'poses her mamma made a bushel of currant wine last summer, unless it's a baby, that doesn't know any better."

“ *I* knows better. *I*’se a goorl, and can walk,” said little Katie, bridling.

“ I didn’t say you *were* a baby, you precious Flyaway! Who’s cunning?”

“ *I*’m is,” replied the child, settling back upon the seat with a sigh of relief. She was very sensitive on the point of age, and, like Dotty, could not abide the idea of being thought young.

“ How far are we going?” asked Mr. Parlin.

“ I do not know exactly,” replied Mrs. Clifford; “ but I will tell you how far Mr. Skeels, one of our oldest natives, calls it. He says ‘ he reckons it is three screeches.’ ”

“ How far is a ‘ screech,’ pray?”

“ The distance a human voice can be heard, I presume.”

“ Let us try it,” said Dotty Dimple; and she instantly set up a scream so loud that

the birds in the trees took to their wings in alarm. Katie chimed in with a succession of little shrieks about as powerful as the peep of a little chicken.

“I have heard that they once measured distances by ‘shoots,’ ” said Mrs. Clifford, laughing; “but I hope it will not be necessary to illustrate *them* by firing a gun.”

They next passed on old and weather-worn graveyard.

“This,” said Mrs. Clifford, “was once known, in the choice language of the back-woodsmen, as a ‘briar-patch;’ and when people died, it was said they ‘winked out.’ ”

“‘Winked out,’ Aunt’Ria? how dreadful!”

“Wing tout,” echoed Katie; “how defful!”

“O, what beautiful, beautiful grass we’re riding by, auntie! When the wind blows it, it *winks* so softly! Why, it looks like a green river running ever so fast.”

“That is a sort of prairie land, dear, and very rich. Look on the other side of the road, and tell me what you think of those trees.”

“O, Aunt 'Ria, I couldn't climb up there, nor a boy either! It would take a pretty spry squirrel—wouldn't it, though?”

“A pitty sp'y squirrel, I fink,” remarked Katie, who did not consider any of Dotty's sentences complete until she herself had added a finishing touch.

“They are larger than our trees, Alice.”

“O, yes, papa. They look as if they grew, and grew, and forgot to stop.”

“Velly long trees, tenny rate,” said Katie, throwing up her arms in imitation of branches, and jumping so high that her mother was obliged to take her in her lap in order to keep her in the carriage.

“And, O, papa, it is so smooth between

the trees, we can peep like a spy-glass, right through! Why, it seems like a church."

"I don't see um," said Katie, stretching her neck and looking in vain for a church.

"The groves were God's first temples," repeated Mr. Parlin, reverently. "These trees have no undergrowth of shrubs, like our New England trees."

"But, O, look! look, papa! What is that long green *dangle*, dripping down from up high? No, swinging up from down low?"

"Yes, what is um, Uncle Eddard?"

"That is a mistletoe-vine embracing a hickory tree. It is called a 'tree-thief,' because it steals its food from the tree it grows upon."

"Why, papa, I shouldn't think 'twas a thief, for the tree knows it. A thief comes in the night, when there doesn't anybody know it. I should think 'twas a *beggar*."

"I fink so too," said Flyaway, straining her eyes to look at she knew not what. "I fink um ought to ask *pease*."

"All this tract of country where we are riding now," said Mrs. Clifford, "was overflowed last sping by the river. It is called 'bottom land,' and is extremely rich."

"I never thought the Hoojers had a very clean, blue, pretty river," said Dotty, thoughtfully; "it looks some like a mud-puddle. Perhaps it carried off too much of this dirt."

"Muddy-puddil," replied Katie, "full of dirt."

As they rode they passed houses whose chimneys were inhospitably left out of doors.

"Why, look, auntie," said Dotty; "theres a house turned wrong side out!"

These buildings had no cellars, but were propped upon logs, leaving room for the air

to pass under the floor, and for other things to pass under, such as cats, dogs, and chickens.

“Why, where *do* the people go to when they want to go down cellar?” asked Dotty, in a maze.

Near one of these houses she was seized with an irresistible thirst. Mr. Parlin gave the reins to Mrs. Clifford, and stepped out of the carriage, then helped Dotty and Katie to alight.

They found a sharp-nosed woman cooking corn-dodgers for a family of nine children. Whether it was their breakfast or dinner hour, it was hard to tell. When Mr. Parlin asked for water, the woman wiped her forehead with her apron, and replied, “O, yes, stranger,” and one of the little girls, whose face was stained with something besides the kisses of the sun, brought some water from the spring in a gourd.

“ Well, Dotty Dimple,” said Mrs. Clifford, when they were all on their way again, “ what did you see in the house?”

“ O, I saw a woman with a whittled nose, and a box of flowers in the window.”

“ And children,” said Katie; “ four, five hunnerd chillen.”

“ The box was labelled ‘ Assorted Lozenges,’ ” said Mr. Parlin; “ but I observed that it contained a black imperial rose; so the occupants have an eye for beauty, after all. I presume they cannot trust their flowers out of doors on account of the pigs.”

“ They brought me water in a squash-shell,” cried Dotty; “ it is so funny out West!”

“ *I* dinked in a skosh-shell, too; and *I* fink it’s *vely* funny out West!” said little Echo.

They were riding behind the other car-

riage, and at some distance, in order to avoid the dust from its wheels.

“Henry has stopped,” said Mrs. Clifford. “We have reached ‘Small’s Enlargement,’ and cannot comfortably ride any farther. The lot next to this is ours, and it is there we are going for the pecans.”

Dotty could hardly wait to be lifted out, so eager was she to walk on the “Small Enlargement.” She spoke of it afterwards as an “ensmallment;” and the confusion of ideas was very natural. It was the place where Grace and the “Princess of the Ruby Seal” had gone, some years before, to have their fortunes told. It was a wild picturesque region, overgrown with tulip trees, Judas trees, and scrub oaks.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE WOODS.

THE party walked leisurely along till they came to a log church, which Mr. Parlin paused to admire. It was in harmony, he said, with the roughness of the landscape.

“I should like to attend service here by moonlight; I think it would be very sweet and solemn in such a lonely place. There would be no sound outside; and as you looked through the open door, you would only see a few quiet trees listening to the words of praise.”

“The evenings here must seem like something holy,” said Mrs. Clifford, “‘the nun-

like evenings, telling dew-beads as they go.”

“O, my shale!” cried Katie, dancing before the church door, and clapping her hands; “that’s the bear’s house, the *bear’s* house! Little boy went in there, drank some of the old bear’s podge, so *sour* he couldn’t drink it.” Here she looked disgusted, but added with a honeyed smile, “Then bimeby drank some o’ *little* bear’s podge, and *’twas* so sweet he drank it aw—all up!”

Everybody laughed, it was so absurd to think of looking for bears and porridge in a building where people met to worship. Dotty had just been saying to herself, “How strange that God is in this mizzable house out West, just as if it was in Portland!” But Katie had rudely broken in upon her meditations.

“O, what a Flyaway!” said she; “you don’t do any good.”

“Yes, I does.”

“Well, what?”

“O, I tell ‘tories.”

“Is that all?”

“I p’ay with little goorls; and then I p’ay some more; and I wash de dishes. I’ll tell *you* a ‘tory,” added she, balancing herself on a stump, and making wild gestures with her arms, somewhat as she had seen Horace do.

“‘Woe to de Dotties and sons ‘o men,
Woe to ‘em all when I yoam again!’”

One wee forefinger pointed up to the sky; the right hand, doubled to a threatening little fist, was shaken at Dotty, while the young orator’s face was so wrinkled with scowls that Dotty laughed outright.

“Do speak that again,” she said. “You are the cunningest baby!”

“‘Woe to de Dotties—!’ No, I can’t tell it ’thout I have sumpin to stan’ on!” sighed Miss Flyaway, falling off the stump directly against Dotty.

“I believe you’ve broken me,” cried Dotty; for, though Katie was small, her weight pressed heavily.

“Well, Fibby’s broke sumpin too,” replied she, calmly. “What does lamps wear?”

“I s’pose you mean chimneys.

“Yes, Fibby has did it; she’s broke a chimley.”

“Look up here, little Ruffleneck; you’re an honor to the state,” said brother Horace, proudly. “You don’t find such a ‘cute child as this in Yankee land, Dotty Dimple.”

“You musn’t call me a Yankee,” said Dotty, who never liked Horace’s tone when he used the word. “I’m not a Yankee; I’m a ‘Publican !’”

“Hurrah for you!” shouted Horace, swinging his hat; “hurrah for Miss Parlin Number Three!”

“Dear, dear! what have I said now? I don’t want him to hurrah for me,” thought Dotty.

Horace returned to his manners.

“She’s such a firebrand that I like to make her eyes flash; but we must be polite to visitors; so here goes.”

“Cousin Dotty,” said he aloud, dropping his mocking tones, and speaking very respectfully, “if you are a true Republican, I honor you as such, and I’ll never call you a Yankee again.”

“Well, I *am* a ‘Publican to the white bone!’”

What Dotty meant by the “white bone” was rather uncertain, it being one of those little figures of speech which will not bear criticism.

“Then you believe in universal suffering?”

“O, yes,” answered Dotty, quickly.

“And the black walnut bureau?”

Dotty hesitated.

“If the ‘Publicans do, and my father does.”

“O, yes; everybody believes in the black walnut bureau—that ever saw one.”

Dotty glanced at Horace stealthily; but his face was so serious that she was sure he could not be making sport of her. They were walking a little in advance of the others, Horace dragging Flyaway, who was intent upon digging her little heels into the ground.

“This place is sometimes called Goblin Valley,” said the boy. “A goblin means a sort of ghost; but nobody but simpletons believe in such things,” added he, quickly, for he was too high-minded to wish to frighten his little cousin.

“O, I’m not at all afraid of such things,” said Dotty quietly; “I’ve got all over it. I know what ghosts are now; they are pumpkins.”

“Excuse my smiling,” said Horace, laughing uproariously.

“You may laugh, cousin Horace, but I’ve seen them. They have a candle inside; and that’s why my father brought me out West, because the doctor said it frightened me so. Why, they had to pour water over me and drown me almost to death, or I’d have died!”

“I wonder!”

“Yes, ’twas Johnny Eastman; but his mamma gave me a beautiful little tea-set, with *golder* rims than the one that was burnt up; and Johnny and Percy both felt dreadfully.”

“Wanted the tea-set themselves—did they?”

“O, no; *they* never play tea. That isn’t why they feel dreadfully; it’s because, if they ever frighten me again, the Mayor ’ll have them put in the *penitential*, and they know it.”

“They were mean fellows; that’s a fact,” said Horace, with genuine indignation. “I used to be full of mischief when I was small; but I never frightened a little girl in my life; and no boy would do it that thinks anything of himself.”

Dotty looked up admiringly at the youth of twelve years, liking him all the better for his chivalry, as any of you little girls would have done.

“Boy-cousins are not always alike,” said she, as if the idea was quite new; “some are good, and some are naugh—”

The word was cut in two by a scream. A large and very handsome snake was gliding

gracefully across her path. The like of it, for size and brilliancy, she had never seen before.

“O, how boo-ful!” cried Katie, darting after it. Horace held her back. Dotty trembled violently.

“Kill it,” she screamed; “throw stones at it; take me away! take me away!”

“Poh, Dotty; nothing but an innocent snake; he’s more afraid of you than you are of him.”

“You told him take you away two times,” exclaimed Katie, “and he didn’t, and he didn’t.”

“I never knew you had such awful things out West,” said Dotty shuddering. “And I don’t think *now* there’s *any* difference in boy-cousins! They never take you away, nor do anything you ask ‘em to—so there!”

“Why, Dotty, he was hurrying as fast as

he could to get out of our sight; there was no need of taking you away."

"She needn't be 'fraid," observed Flyaway, soothingly; "if I had a sidders, I could ha' cutted him in two."

By this time the rest of the party had arrived. Grace and Cassy walked together very confidentially under the same umbrella which had sheltered them years ago—a black one marked with white paint, "Stolen from H. S. Clifford." "Bold thieves" Horace called them; but they deigned no notice of his remark.

"I'll get an answer," murmured Horace, repeating aloud,—

" 'Hey for the apple and ho for the pear,
But give me the girl with the red hair.' "

At this Grace turned around sharply, and shook her bare head, which gleamed in the sun like burnt gold.

“Panoria Swan has red hair,” said she,—
“fire-red; but mine is auburn.”

“O, I only wanted to make you speak,
Grace; that will do.”

“Here we are at the woods,” said Mr. Clifford. He had once owned a neighboring lot, and his pecan trees had been fenced around to protect them from the impertinent swine; but now the party were going into the heart of the forest.

The pecan trees were tall, somewhat like maples, with the nuts growing on them in shucks, after the manner of walnuts. These shucks, if left till the coming of frost, would have opened of themselves, and scattered the nuts to the ground; but our friends preferred to gather a few bushels before they were perfectly ripened, rather than lose them altogether.

As the easiest method, Mr. Clifford said

they might as well fell a tree, for he had a right to do so. He had brought an axe in his carriage; and Mr. Parlin, whose good right arm had never been injured in the war, soon brought a noble tree to the ground.

Then there was a scrambling to see which should break off the most shucks. Dotty sat down on a log, half afraid there might be a snake lurking under it, and picked with all her might.

“We don’t have any pecans at Deering’s Oaks,” she thought, “and nothing but shells at the Islands. I only wish Prudy **was** here. Prudy would think I had a little temper at Horace just now; I wonder if he did. I will show him I am sorry; for he *is* a good boy, and a great deal more ‘style’ and polite than Percy.”

“What makes our little darling look so dismal?” said Cassy, taking a seat beside Dotty Dimple.





“O, I was thinking a great *many* things! I’m so far off, Cassy! When I think of that, I want to scream right out. Prudy’s at home, and I’m here! I don’t want to be so far off.”

“But only think, dear, how much you will have to tell when you get home; and in such a little while too.”

Dotty was instantly consoled, for a crowd of recollections rushed into her mind of wonderful events which had occurred since she parted from Prudy. The “far off” feeling left her as she thought of the stories she should have to tell to admiring listeners one of these days.

When it was time for dinner, Mrs. Clifford spread a table-cloth on the ground, and covered it with the nice food she had brought. It was a delightful entertainment. Flyaway was so nearly wild with the new experience

of eating in the woods, among the toads and squirrels, that she required constant watching to keep her within bounds. She wanted to run after all the little creeping things she saw, and give them part of her dinner. Horace gladly assumed the care of her. He did not mean that his mother should regret having brought little Topknot.

CHAPTER X.

SURPRISES.

AFTER a very happy day in the woods, the Cliffords started for home with as many nuts as they could carry.

Dotty said she had had a nice time; but for some reason she could not go to sleep that night. There was a burning sensation in her right side, and she had a horrible fancy that a snake had bitten her. She could not endure the thought of lying and listening to the strokes of the clock.

“I’ll go find my father,” thought she, with that “far-off” feeling at her heart again.

But which way to go? She had not yet

learned the plan of the house, but had no doubt she could find her father's room. She pattered about the chambers with her little bare feet, and at last waked Horace by overturning a chair near his bed.

“Why, who is there? And what's wanted?”

“It's me, and I want my father.”

By this time Aunt Maria, hearing a noise, had come in with a light.

“Are you sick, dear child?”

“No, auntie; I don't know what's the matter; I 'spect it's the blues. I had 'em you know, when the beer came to an end—I mean the world—I mean that night Polly Whiting called me up.”

Horace used all his self-control to keep from laughing.

“Well, Cousin Dotty, you do look blue, I declare; as blue as the skimmiest milk of

the cheatiest milkman. Mother, isn't there something in the medicine chest that is good for the blues?"

"They are in my side—I mean *it*," said Dotty, dismally. "I'm afraid it's a—snake?"

Mrs. Clifford took the afflicted child in her arms, and began to question her with regard to the exact spot where she felt the "blues," assuring her that some relief might be afforded if the nature of the trouble could only be discovered.

"O, ho," cried Horace, suddenly; "I know what it is; it's a *jigger*."

Upon reflection, it was decided that Horace might be right. A little creature called the *chègre*, had perhaps made its way out of some decayed log and crept in under Dotty's skin, causing all this heat and irritation. There was a small, hard swelling on her side, which appeared to move. Her

father asked her if she was willing to have him cut it out with his penknife.

Dotty hesitated; her nerves quivered at sight of the sharp blade.

“But that cruel little *chègre* is drinking your blood, my daughter. The more he drinks, the larger he will grow, and the harder it will be to cut him out.”

“That’s so,” said Horace. “I could preach, with jigger for a text. Ahem! He is like sin—the more you let him stay, the more you’ll wish you hadn’t. Come, Dotty, be brave, and out with him!”

“You can talk to *me*,” said Dotty, bitterly; “but if it was *your* side that had a *jiggle* in, perhaps you’d feel as bad’s I do.”

Horace was prepared for this.

“But I’ve had them cut out twice, miss. Being a boy, I could bear it!”

This settled the question.

“ Girls are just as brave as boys,” said Dotty; and submitted to the knife without a murmur.

The next day she was regarded as something of an invalid. She had lost so much sleep that she did not rise until her father was far away on his journey. Aunt Maria gave her a late breakfast, which was also to serve for an early dinner. It was an oyster-stew; and Dotty enjoyed eating it in Mrs. Clifford’s room on the lounge. Katie sat beside her, watching every mouthful, and begging for it the moment it entered the spoon.

“ Don’t tease so,” said Dotty; “ your poor cousin is sick; you don’t want to take away her soup?”

“ Yes, I does,” replied Katie, coolly; “ I likes it myself,” opening her mouth for more.

Dotty gave her an oyster. The next moment something grated against Katie's teeth, and she picked out the hard substance with her fingers. Mrs. Clifford happened to see it.

"That is a pearl," said she.

"A pearl, auntie? Why, isn't that something precious? Mamma has pearls in a ring."

"I will show it to your uncle," replied Mrs. Clifford, turning it over in her hand; "but I think it is a true pearl, only a little discolored by the heat it has undergone in being cooked."

"O, I'll have a ring made of it! What funny oysters you do have out West!"

"The pyurl is mine," said Katie; "I finded it in my toof."

"No, it's mine, darling, for 'twas in my stew."

"Well, tenny rate, I want um," said Katie, dancing around the sofa, "if you pees um."

"O, no; little bits of girlies don't need it —do they, auntie?"

"I hope," said Mrs. Clifford, smiling, "it will not cost either of you any of those 'falling pearls which men call tears.' It isn't worth crying about."

Katie was easily persuaded to give it up.

"You may keep 'm if you'll let me have two poun's of gold; *two* poun's to make me a ying."

Dotty could not promise the gold; but said Katie should have the next pickled lime she bought with her money; and this answered quite as well.

Just as Dotty was going to her room to put away the choice pearl in a box which stood in her trunk, there was a loud noise. Phebe, eoming up stairs with a pail of water

in each hand, had stumbled and fallen. The water was pouring down in a cataract, and after it rattled the pails.

Mrs. Clifford ran to the rescue. Phebe was looking aghast, making a wild gesture with one hand, and rubbing her nose with the other.

“ You didn’t fall on your *nose*, Phebe?”

“ Yes, ma’am,” sobbed the poor girl; “ and I believe it’s broke; I heard it crack!”

Mrs. Clifford might have upbraided Phebe for carrying two buckets up stairs at once, contrary to orders; but she did nothing of the sort; she kindly sent for the surgeon, who set the two fragments of nose together as well as he could.

“ Never mind it, child,” remarked he, facetiously, to the disconsolate Phebe; “ you have only been beautifying your countenance. Hereafter you will not be taken for one of the flat-nosed race.”

The young African saw no amusement in the joke, and left the room with her hand-kerchief at her eyes.

“Doctor,” said Mrs. Clifford, “how could you speak so to that poor child? She has just as much regard for her personal appearance as you and I have for ours. You never use such language to one of my family; and please remember I would not have the feelings of my servants unnecessarily wounded, any sooner than those of my children.”

“I stand rebuked, my dear madam,” replied the family physician, respectfully.

“I wish there were more such women as Mrs. Clifford,” mused he, as he drove home; “she lives up to the Golden Rule; and if there’s any better prescription than the Golden Rule for making a lady, I haven’t seen it yet; that’s all.”

It was one of those days when strange things seem ready to happen, one after another. Dotty, whose little head was rather unsettled by seeing and hearing so many new things, had an impression that such events as these were always occurring out West, and that they would never have happened anywhere else.

Chègres in logs, pearls in oysters; and now somebody had fallen up stairs and broken her nose. In Maine who ever heard the like?

Dotty twirled her hair, in a state of wonder as to what would come next. It came before bedtime.

She and Grace had been marching about the dining-room, singing martial songs. They went into the darkened parlor, still promenading, Grace's arm about her little cousin's waist.

Suddenly Grace stopped, and whispered,—
“What’s that?”

Dotty listened. It was a groan. It must proceed from a human throat; but there was no one in the room but their two selves.

“I think there is *something* in the hall,” whispered Grace; “I must go tell papa.”

Mr. Clifford immediately took a lamp, and went to investigate the mystery. Dotty insisted upon going too, though she hardly knew why, except that the prospect of some unknown horror fascinated her. She clung to the skirt of her uncle’s coat, though he would have preferred not to be hindered. No one else, not even Horace, cared to follow.

As they entered the parlor there was the same sound from the hall, even more unearthly than ever. Dotty had entire faith in her uncle, and was not at all alarmed till

they passed through the parlor doorway, and she saw the finger-prints of blood on the panels. Then she did tremble, and she had half a mind to draw back; but curiosity was stronger than fear.

What *could* it be that walked into people's houses *Out West*, and groaned so in their front halls? She must see the whole thing for herself, and be prepared to describe it to Prudy.

She soon knew what it meant. There was a poor intoxicated man lying on the mat. Seeing the door open, he had staggered in while the family were at tea. In some way he had hurt his hand, and stained the door with blood. So there was nothing at all mysterious or supernatural in the affair, when it was once explained.

The poor creature was too helpless to be sent into the street; and Mr. Clifford and

Katinka carried him into the stable, and laid him upon a bed of sweet hay.

“I’m glad not to be a Hoojer,” said Dotty, with a severe look at her Cousin Horace. “You don’t ever see such bad men in the State of Maine. The whiskey is locked up; and I don’t know as there *is* any whiskey.”

“Down East is a great place, Dotty! Don’t I wish I was a Yankee—I mean a ‘Publican?’”

“But you can’t be, Horace,” returned little Dotty, looking up at him with deep pity in her bright eyes; “you weren’t born there. You’re a Hoojer, and you’ll have to *stay* a Hoojer.”

CHAPTER XI.

SNIGGLING FOR EELS.

NEXT day Mr. Clifford said he would take all the children, except Miss Flyaway, to see a coal mine. It was nothing new to Horace, who was in the habit of exploring his native town as critically as a regularly employed surveyor. You could hardly show him anything which he had not already seen and examined carefully, from a steamboat to a dish of "sour-krout." Grace and Cassy were by no means as learned, and had never ventured under ground. They feared, yet longed, to make the experiment.

As for Dotty, she knew Jennie Vance's

ring had been found in a mine. She had a vague notion that strange, half-human creatures were at work in the bowels of the earth, hunting for similar bits of jewelry. She had a secret hope that, if she went down there, she might herself see something shining in a dark corner; and what if it should be a piece of yellow gold, just suitable to be made into a ring to contain the oyster pearl!

How surprised Jennie Vance would be to see such a precious treasure on her little friend's finger!

“She didn't find her ring herself, and it isn't a pearl. But I shan't give mine away, and shan't promise to, and then tell that I never. That's a *hyper'blee!*”

Dotty had found a new name for white lies.

“It is so nice,” said Grace, as they started from the door, “to have a little cousin visit-

ing us! for it makes us think of going to a great many places where we never went before."

"Then I'm glad there *is* a little cousin, and *very* glad it's me."

"They like to have me here," she thought, "almost as much as if I was Prudy."

Horace enjoyed the distinction of walking with the handsome Miss Dimple. When they met one of the boys of his acquaintance, he found an opportunity to whisper in his ear,—

"This is our little cousin from Down East. Isn't she a beauty? She can climb a tree as well as you can."

Dotty heard the whisper, and unconsciously tossed her head a little. She could not but conclude that she was becoming a personage of some consequence.

"I'm a beauty; and now I'm growing

pleasant, too. I don't have any temper, and haven't had any for a great while."

Dotty did not reflect that there had been no occasion for anger. If one cannot be amiable when one is visiting, and is treated with every possible attention, then one must be ill-natured indeed! Dotty deceived herself. The lion was still there; he was curled up, and out of sight in his den.

They passed several lager-beer saloons and candy shops; saw Dutchmen smoking meerschaums under broad awnings; and heard them talking in the guttural German language, as if—so Dotty thought—they had something in their throats which they could not swallow.

After walking a long distance on a level road, and seeing nothing which looked like a hill, they came to the coal mines. Such a dirty spot! There were men standing about

with faces as black as night, and out of the blackness gleamed the whites of their eyes like bits of white paper surrounded by pools of ink.

Dotty stood still and gazed.

“Horace,” she whispered, “my conscience tells me they are niggroes.”

“Then, dear, your conscience has made a mistake; they are white men when they are clean.”

Mr. Clifford went up to one of the men, and asked if himself and the little people, might have an inside view of the mine. The man smiled a black and white smile, which Dotty thought was horrible, and said,—

“O, yes, sir; come on.”

There was a large platform lying over the top like a trap-door, and through this platform was drawn a large rope. Grace and

Cassy both screamed as they stood upon the planks, and caught Mr. Clifford by the arms.

Dotty was not afraid; she liked the excitement. The men said it was as safe as going down cellar, and she believed them.

But she was not exactly prepared for the strange, wild, dizzy sensation in her head when they began to sink down, down into the earth. It was delightful. "It seemed like being swung very high in the air," she said, "only it was just as *different*, too, as it could be."

The men had live torches in their caps, which startled the dark mine with gleams of light and strange black shadows.

"I don't feel as if I was in this world," cried Dotty, with a sensation of awe, and catching Grace by the arm to make sure she was near some one who had warm flesh and blood. After this emotion had passed, she went

around by herself, and explored the mine carefully, telling no one what she was seeking. There was the blackest of coal and the darkest of earth in abundance; but Dotty Dimple did not find a gold ring, nor anything which looked more like it than two blind mules. These poor animals lived in the mines, and hauled coal. They had once possessed as good eyes as mules need ask for; but, living where there was nothing but darkness to be seen, and no sunlight to see it by, pray what did they need of eyesight?

“Cassy,” said Grace, “don’t you remember, when we were children, we used to say we meant some time to live together and keep house? Suppose we try it here. We might have gas-light, you know, and all our food could be brought down on a dumb waiter.”

“Yes,” said Cassy, who was very fond of sleep; “and we needn’t ever get up in the morning.”

“No skeetos,” suggested Dotty.

“Men have lived in the earth sometimes,” said Horace. “There was St. Dunstan; his ceil was hardly large enough to stand in—was it, father? And sometimes he stood in water all night, and sang psalms.”

“What was that for, Uncle Edward?”

“He was trying to please God.”

“But uncle, I don’t believe God liked it.”

“The man was, no doubt, insane, dear. But his perseverance in doing what he thought right was something grand. Now suppose, children, we ascend and see what is going on atop of the earth.”

“I’m glad we didn’t always have to stay in that black hole,” said Dotty, catching her breath as they were drawn up.

Then the thought occurred to her that the One who had made the sunlight and the soft green earth was kinder than she had ever supposed.

"Well," said cousin Horace, "now we've done the mine; and this evening, Dotty, you and I will go and sniggle for eels."

Dotty dared not tell any one that she had expected to find gold, and had been disappointed.

Her first act, after reaching Aunt 'Ria's, was to look in the little box for her precious pearl. It was gone! No doubt Flyaway had taken it. Dotty mourned over her own carelessness in leaving her treasure where the roguish little one could reach it. Instead of finding gold, she had lost something she supposed was more precious than gold. But she bore up as bravely as possible, and said to Mrs. Clifford,—

“You needn’t punish the baby, Aunt ‘Ria; she didn’t know she was stealing.”

Dotty had never seen an eel. Like a coal mine, a pearl, a Guinea pig, a drunken man, and a *chègre*, she supposed an eel was peculiar to the climate, and could be found nowhere but out West. As it had been described as being “really a fish, but looking more like a snake,” she did not expect to be very much charmed with its personal appearance. She wished to catch one, or see one caught, because it would be something to tell Prudy.

There was no moon, and the night was cloudy.

“My son, be sure you take good care of your cousin,” said Mrs. Clifford, the last thing.

“So funny!” Dotty thought. “They don’t seem to think there’s anybody else in this world but just *me!*”

Horace carried with him some light wood, and, when they reached the river bank, kindled a bright fire.

“We'll make things look friendly and pleasant,” said he; “and by and by Mr. Eel will walk along to the fire, and ask if we entertain travellers. ‘If so,’ says he, ‘you may count me in.’”

“How dried up the river looks!” said Dotty.

“That is because the draymen have taken so much water out of it, little cousin. Haven't you seen them going by with barrels?”

“I shouldn't think the mayor 'd 'low them to do it, Horace; for some time there won't be any river left.”

It's too bad to impose upon you,” said Horace, laughing; “I was only joking.”

Dotty drew herself up with so much dig-

nity that she nearly fell backward into the fire.

Good-natured Horace repented him of his trifling.

“Look down in the water, Dotty, and see if there is anything there that looks like an eel?”

Dotty did not move.

“Don’t go to being vexed, chickie; you’re as bright as anybody, after all.”

Dotty smiled again.

“There,” said Horace, “now we’ll begin not to talk. We’ll not say a word, and next thing we know, we’ll catch that eel.”

But he was mistaken. They knew several other things before they knew they had caught an eel. Horace knew it was growing late, and Dotty knew it made her sleepy to sit without speaking.

“Enough of this,” cried Horace, breaking

the spell of silence at last. "You may talk now as much as you please. I've had my line out two hours. They say 'in mud eel is;' but I don't believe it."

"Nor I either."

But at that very moment an eel bit. Horace drew him in with great satisfaction.

Dotty gave a little start of disgust, but had the presence of mind not to scream at sight of the ugly creature, because she had heard Horace say girls always did scream at eels.

"He will know now I *am* as bright as any body; as bright as a boy."

They started for home, well pleased with their evening's work.

"Did you notice," asked Dotty, "how I acted? I never screamed at that eel once."

"You're a lady, Dotty. I don't know but you might be trusted to go troutting. I never dared take Prudy, she is troubled so with palpitation of the tongue."

A proud moment this for Dotty. More discreet than Sister Prudy. Praise could no farther go!

An agreeable surprise awaited her at Aunt Maria's.

“Please accept with my love,” said Grace, giving her a tiny box.

Dotty opened the box, and found, enveloped in rose-colored cotton, a beautiful gold ring, dotted with a pearl.

“I was the thief, Cousin Dotty. I hope you will excuse the liberty I took in going to your trunk.”

“So it is my own oyster pearl,” cried Dotty. “O, I never was so glad in my life.”

CHAPTER XII.

“A POST OFFICE LETTER.”

THE “far-off” feeling rather increased upon Dotty. It seemed to her that she had never before reflected upon the immense distance which lay between her and home. The house might burn up before ever she got back. Prudy might have a lung fever, and mamma the “typo.” It was possible for Zip to choke with a bone, and for a thousand other dreadful things to happen. And if Dotty were needed ever so much, she could not reach home without travelling all those miles.

Then, what if one of the conductors should prove to be a "*non*," and she should never reach home at all, but, instead of that, should be found lying in little pieces under a railroad bridge?

Sister Prudy had never troubled her head with such fancies. The dear God would attend to her, she knew. He cared just as much about her one little self as if she had been the whole United States. But Dotty did not understand how this could be.

"I wish I hadn't come out West at all," thought she. "They're going to take me up to Indi'nap'lis; and there I'll have to stay, p'raps a week; for my father always has such long business! Dear, dear! and I don't know but everybody's dead!"

Just as she had drawn a curtain of gloom over her bright little face, and had buried both her dimples under it, and all her smiles,

Uncle Henry came home from his office, looking very roguish.

“ Well, little miss, and what do you suppose I’ve brought you from up town? Put on your thinking-cap, and tell me.”

“ Bananas? papaws? ‘simmons? lemons? Dear me, what is it? Is it to eat or wear? And have you got it in your pocket?”

Uncle Henry, who had had his hand behind him, now held it out with a letter in it —a letter in a white envelope, directed, in clear, elegant writing, to “Miss Alice B. Parlin, care of H. S. Clifford, Esq., Quinn, Indiana.”

There could be no mistake about it; the letter was intended for Dotty Dimple, and had travelled all the way by mail. But then that title, Miss, before the name! It was more than probable that the people all along the road had supposed it was intended for a young lady!



DOTTY'S FIRST POST-OFFICE LETTER. Page 162.

When the wonderful thing was given her, her "first post-office letter," she clapped her hands for joy.

"Miss? Miss?" repeated she, as Horace re-read the direction; for she was not learned in the mysteries of writing, and could not read it for herself.

"O, yes. *Miss*, certainly! If it was to me, it would be *Mr.*"

"*Master*, you mean," corrected Grace.

"No, Horace, you are not *Mr.* yet!" said Dotty, confidently; "you've never been married."

The next thing in order was the reading of the letter. Dotty tore it open with a trembling hand. I should like to see another letter that would make a child so happy as that one did! It was written by three different people, and all to the same little girl. Not a line to Uncle Henry or

Aunt Maria, or Horace or Grace. All to Dotty's self, as if she were a personage of the first importance.

Mamma began it. How charming to see "My dear little daughter," traced so carefully in printed capitals! Then it was such a satisfaction to be informed, in the sweetest language, that this same "dear little daughter" was sadly missed. Dotty was so glad to be missed!

There was a present waiting for her at home. Mrs. Parlin was not willing to say what it was; but it had been sent by Aunt Madge from the city of New York, and must be something fine.

There were two whole pages of the clear, fair writing, signed at the close, "Your affectionate mother, Mary L. Parlin."

Just as if Dotty didn't know what mother's name was!

Then Susy followed with a short account of Zip, and how he had stuck himself full of burs. (He wasn't choked yet, thought Dotty; and that was a comfort.) Then a longer account of the children's picnic at Deering's Oaks.

Dotty sighed, and felt that fate had been rather cruel in depriving her of that picnic.

"But I have had something better than that," said she, brightening; "I've walked on an Ensmallment, and I have picked pecans."

But the best was to come. It was from Prudy.

"**MY DEAR LITTLE DARLING SISTER :** I want to see you more than tongue can tell. Norah let Susy bake some biscuits last night, because there wasn't anybody at home but mother, and grandma, and Susy, and Norah,

and me. But they were as tough as *sew leather*. Susy forgot the creamor tartar, and soda, and salt. She wasn't to blame.

“I'm so lonesome I can't wait to see my darling sister.

“Now I have some news to tell:—

“Mother is going to be married!

“You will think that is funny; but she is going to be married to the same husband she was before.

“It will be a Crystal Wedding, because it is fifteen years.

“She invites you and father to come home to it; she couldn't have it without father.

“You are going to be the bridesmaid! How queer! Mamma didn't think, the first time she was married, that ever it would be *you* that would be her bridesmaid!

“From your dear, dear

“PRUDY.”

“ P. S. There will be wedding cake.”

“ P. S. No. 2. Johnny Eastman is going to be *bridegroom*, to stand up, if he doesn’t do anything naughty before. P. P.”

The look of “ mouldy melancholy ” disappeared from Dotty’s face entirely.

“ A wedding ! A *crystal* wedding ! What can that be ? I didn’t know my father and mother would ever be married any more. Aunt ’Ria, were you and Uncle Henry ever married any more ?”

“ This is a sort of make-believe wedding,” replied Mrs. Clifford ; “ that is all. And since you are to be bridesmaid, Dotty, I wonder if I cannot find a pair of white slippers for you. I remember Grace had a pair some years ago, which she has never worn.”

The slippers were produced, and fitted

perfectly. Dotty danced about, embraced her auntie, made a great many wild speeches, and finally found herself in her uncle's lap, kissing him and laughing aloud.

"I suppose now," said Mr. Clifford, "we cannot keep you much longer, and I am sorry, for it is very pleasant to have our little cousin here to talk with us."

"I don't wan't um go 'way, I don't want um go 'way," spoke up little Katie.

"But I *must* go to meet my papa," returned Dotty, with a business air. "I have to be at home to get ready for the wedding."

It was very pleasant to know people liked her to stay. She ran into the kitchen, and said to Katinka,—

"O, Katinka, my papa and mamma are going to be married again! Do you know I've got to start day after to-morrow?"

"So?" replied Katinka, not very much

impressed. "I'm going to a party. I must up stairs go, and make my hairs and shut my dress. Gute Nacht."

"I'm only going to stay one more day; aren't you sorry?" said Dotty to broken-nosed Phebe, who came in from the pantry with a long face.

"Why, I reckoned you was going *to-morrow*," was Phebe's cool reply, rolling the whites of her eyes to hide a twinkle of fun. She knew Dotty expected her to say, "I am sorry;" but, though she really was sorry, she would not confess it just then, because she was an inveterate tease.

Dotty felt a little chilled. She could not look into the future and see the tomato pin-cushion Phebe was to give her, with the assurance that "she liked her a heap; she was a right smart child, and not a bit stuck up."

The day ended with Dotty's dear, dear letter under her pillow. She was going to be very happy by and by; but just now she thought she was so homesick that she should never go to sleep. She longed to see Prudy, and hear her say, "O, you darling sister!"

Then that wedding! Those white slippers!

How they did all miss her at home! Such dear friends as she had, and such beautiful things as were going to happen!

"But they are so good to me here! I've behaved so well they love me dearly. If I go home, I can't stay here and have good times. I should be happy if I was at my mother's house and out West too! Every time I'm glad, then there's something else to make me sorry."

So, between a smile and a tear, Dotty

Dimple passed into the beautiful land of dreams; and the moon shone on a little face with a frown between the eyes and a dimple dancing in each cheek.

• What happened to her on her way home and afterward will be told in the story of Dotty Dimple at Play.









